

A YOUTH MINISTRY MODEL TO CHANGE  
MALE ATTITUDES IN THE  
RURAL CHURCH

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**ABSTRACT**

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by

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The focus of the model was to change male youth attitudes in the church leading to spiritual development. The methods used were story telling (sermons), web page design, and rewards. Results were measured through a pre-test and post-test that demonstrated that this model did affect the attitudes of the participants. They became excited about working to benefit the church. The outcomes demonstrated that creating new paradigms is an effective way to reach male youth in this post-modern society. The new paradigm was the non-traditional setting used in this project.

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- professional associates, Dr. Clary Phelps who took this preacher into his church and taught him how to systematically organize the administrative processes in the church. He has been a man this young pastor can count on to aid in any way possible. Dr. Christopher Hutson has been a help to this pastor for many years. He was the chairman of my thesis committee at Hood Theological Seminary and pushed this pastor to pursue excellence. Dr. Hutson again reviewed my work and made suggestions to strengthen the foundation piece. I will always be grateful for his comments on this project. Dr. Otis Robinson agreed to read and offer constructive criticism on this project, I also say thanks.
- to my quality control person who happens to be a cousin named Lynn Watts, who read this book and assisted by checking the grammar.
- to Reverend John Cade for allowing this researcher to administer the pre-test to the teenagers in his church.

- great thanks go to a friend and classmate since my days at Hood Theological Seminary named Sherman Shelton. He and I have talked countless hours on the phone helping and encouraging one another during this process.
- special thanks to my context associates for their time and dedication in helping their pastor implement this project.
- to a countless number of others whose names are too many to call, I say to them, Thank-you.

To my parents Willie and Virginia Curry for their support and advice concerning rest and quiet time during this project; my wife, Tammy; sons Franklin, Keith Jr., and Jonathan for their continued support and encouragement.

## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my wife and all the men who had a major impact on the life of this pastor. Some have gone to be with the Lord and others are still in ministry to serve as examples in the context of church work.

- to the late Reverend John Gaston who was my pastor for more than 20 years. He was a rock in the church.
- to the late Deacon Roddy Moss for being the eyes of the neighborhood during my youth and always relaying the importance of Christian living inside and outside the church.
- to the late Deacon John Smith who was the strong one in the community. If any trouble occurred in the community, you could count on him for guidance.
- to the late Reverend Charlie Hargrave who impacted this pastor as a boy with his spirit in the church and outside the church.
- to the late Deacon Willie Curry Sr. who was my grandfather. He loved me and always had good advice about life and the importance of family.
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- to Reverend Sam Puryear, Jr. for preaching the gospel that this sinner might give his life to Christ.
- to the late Reverend Paris Favors whose path I crossed only briefly. He is the first person to whom I revealed that God was calling me into the gospel ministry.
- to Reverend Bernard Adams who came into my life at a difficult time after the death of pastor Favors. He encouraged me and licensed me to preach the gospel.
- to Doctor Clary Phelps who supervised me during my supervised ministry class. He also recommended that I be ordained by the Rowan Baptist Association.
- to my father Deacon Willie Curry Jr. for being a good example of what hard work will produce for the family.

To my wife Tammy, who has the patience of Job and the love of Ruth, for putting up with this preacher for seven of the last ten years while he preached all over North Carolina and pursued higher education.



## INTRODUCTION

Many people today wear watches that utilize a quartz movement. The quartz watch represents a technological breakthrough. The Swiss invented the quartz movement, yet when the research scientists presented it, the watchmakers rejected the concept. It did not have a main spring or gears. No one believed it could be the watch of the future. They were so confident that it would not be the watch of the future that no one patented the technology. The following year, they presented the quartz movement watch at the world conference. Texas Instruments and Seiko of Japan took one look at this watch and the rest is history. The Swiss were blinded by the success of old technology and their investment in it. When confronted with a new and different way, they totally rejected it. It did not fit into the rules that they were already good at following. Yet not even the best watchmakers in the world could stop time. While the people of God retool and prepare ourselves to be more effective in ministry specifically preaching and leadership, our prayer should be for ways to be more effective through new paradigms.

This researcher has come to the conclusion that, as the black church prepares its strategies for this century, male youth development must become a part of its overall agenda. The African American family has been greatly affected by the influx of drugs into this country. Availability and low cost have resulted in a large number of addicts who cause crime rates to soar in many areas of the country. Incarceration rates are exceedingly high in the black community among males, leaving a negative impression of black males in this society. The church has a biblical responsibility to teach the male children in the home

and at the church. Leadership is needed from church pastors and members to change the attitude of our teenage males in this society.

The church has a responsibility to imitate the work of Jesus in affecting change in male youth attitudes toward the church. Those in leadership positions should examine the context and act accordingly. As John Maxwell says; “When a leader reaches out in passion, he or she is usually met with an answering passion.”<sup>1</sup> Maxwell also says that “Passion makes the impossible possible.”

This researcher knew almost immediately after writing the Spiritual Autobiography that male youth development was the area that should be the project focus. His history over the past 10 years has been one that included male mentoring and development. The missing element in all his past work was the biblical piece that contained the ingredient to implement real change in the attitude of our male teenagers. This biblical application came from men and women (context associates) who provided a mentoring environment that included instruction and a project designed to be implemented by the young men in the church. The aim was to create excitement which would lead to an increase in participation and spiritual development.

The passion of the researcher for youth ministry can be traced directly to the small rural community that comprised the context for his spiritual development. Strong male role models were found throughout the community. These men practiced a practical theology in the church and at their homes. Interaction with them helped to shape the researcher’s belief system. Today’s rural church lacks the small community concept to raise the male child in this way. The church has an obligation to design programs that

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<sup>1</sup> John Maxwell, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities Of A Leader* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 81.

address the need to influence our young men during their teenage years. The older saints lived with few material possessions, yet their life was considered a blessing despite the oppression sometimes suffered for their skin color. One deacon said to the researcher as a child, "I thank the Lord for all that I have." This was one of many interactions that the researcher encountered as he rode his bicycle through the little community stopping at various homes and listening to the senior members of the small area called Southmont.

Today, our male youth need to hear from the senior adult men of the community, in order to understand the responsibility God has given them. This project hopefully brought a new understanding of church, family, and community. The researcher believes that God has entrusted the leadership of the Black Church with wisdom to develop a program that provides direction for future challenges in the rural church. For this reason, I chose to do a Doctor of Ministry project on youth ministry.

This project was designed to provide a structured non-traditional environment for interaction with mentors who follow the teachings of Christ. The mentors take a leading role by providing an example of Christian living. They encouraged by relating to the secular pressures that the teenagers experience daily. The teenagers soon realized through group discussions that the mentors had the same problems in a different context. The key to overcoming the pressures of life (group discussion) was to ask questions, such as, what would Jesus do in this situation? These types of questions would surface during the story-telling sessions.

A pre-test that consisted of 100 adjectives was administered to 11 teenage boys who were members of Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church. The teenagers were instructed to circle 12 words that reflected their view of the church. This was done to gain an understanding of the attitudes of the group before the project began. The youth had

perceptions of the church that affected their willingness to become involved. This information provided a measurement of the effect that the project had on their attitudes before and after the project.

The project had three major parts that comprised the independent variables used to effect the change in attitude. The first was the presentation of narratives, which occurred in a group roundtable discussion. These narratives were designed to promote spiritual development. Secondly, the group would undertake a project that blessed the church as a positive contribution from these teenagers. The team project was the design of a web page for Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church. The idea of a web page was to promote unity and participation within the church. Thirdly, this project contained rewards for participating. There were two group outings that rewarded attendance and work during the six weeks of this project. The intended outcome of this six-week project was an improvement in attitude toward the church, which translates into a willingness to participate in the church, causing faith development. The attitude of the teenagers toward the church at the conclusion of the project was measured by the post-test.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

The researcher remembers being impacted by the church service at nine to twelve years of age. This translated into his conduct at home and in the community where he played. His uncle had a son who was the researcher's age and lived in the same house during the early years. The problem was that his cousin had a mean streak that resulted in the researcher receiving some abuse. His aunt told him of an incident where she got mad because the researcher refused at times to hit him back. She said that the researcher told her that a Christian did not act badly toward other people. Although he does not remember this incident, she assured him it happened. A neighbor spoke of this in a revival the researcher preached recently, recalling how mean his cousin acted. His cousin was stronger and bigger, so this was a problem until he reached the age of thirteen, when the researcher became taller and grew stronger. The irony of this was that they became college roommates and he attended the church of the researcher a few times, telling him that he intends to join.

The sermons at First Baptist Church Southmont often stayed with the researcher and he considered the words even at this early age. The pastor was called gashouse because of the power of his preaching. At ten years of age, his daddy asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up and he said a preacher. Another important moment was the night that he joined the church, which occurred during a revival at the church. There were

times when the spirit would be impacting him in the worship service and he resisted the urge to cry out “glory to his name.” He resisted because of what his friends might think of him. The researcher can say that his spiritual beginnings were in that little country church. Looking back on those years, the Lord was dealing with him and the seed of faith was planted deep within his heart. The church provided good role models who helped to trigger growth. Prayer was a key component inside and outside the church. All community events that family and friends participated in, such as hog killing time, began and ended with prayer. One of the key components of the early years was the church operating as a community in the researcher’s life.

### **Teenage Years**

The teenage years led to a more independent attitude on the part of the researcher. He was required to attend church every Sunday. There was a rule that if you lived in the family home, you had to attend the church on Sunday. The faith of the researcher was growing, but the environment he lived in was pulling him in different directions. Peer pressure became a factor due to the fact that he was a gifted athlete. His ego grew as he became popular throughout his high school years. There were times that other people influenced decisions that were not Christ-like. High school was a time when he experimented with alcohol and partied to the limit. Drugs were not an issue at this time because of his focus on athletics, and contact with people using drugs was rare. The one thing about high school that did bother him was the attitude of some black students towards him. He was active in clubs such as Drama, Spanish, and Black Culture. Some blacks resented the fact that he was in accelerated classes and consistently made the honor roll. He finished high school and enrolled at North Carolina A&T State University. He will

always remember the Sunday before he left for school. The pastor had him to come forward and the church prayed for his safety at school. The saints encouraged him to find a church close by to attend regularly.

### **College Years**

A & T State University was a time of adjustment for him because he had freedom to do whatever he wanted. The first Sunday of his college experience, he put on his suit and followed the flow of students heading to the Baptist church. Institutional Baptist Church was the first church he attended. This church has a special place in his heart because he was ordained there in 1998. His college career did not proceed as smoothly as this first Sunday. He did consider himself to be a Christian even though he became involved with the wrong crowd. He attended classes and fulfilled the requirements to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in the summer of 1978. He moved back home after graduation and did not have much direction in his life. Things begin to change when he met a young girl named Tammy Brown. They dated for 2 years and decided to get married.

### **Married Life**

The researcher continued to do everything possible to further the ministry at Christ Revival Temple Church. The Lord was continuing to speak to him and he saw a vision of outreach that would impact the community and bless the church. The church had grown to 40 members and they bought a house that was remodeled into a church. He asked the pastor if they could talk about the direction he saw for the church. The researcher explained his willingness to move outside the church house and into the community under

his leadership. The pastor was lukewarm to this idea and suggested that he pray about it. Reflecting on this time, the researcher believes that the reservations were due to the fact that he lived more than 40 miles from the church. He worked a full-time job and was very busy with pastoring the church and raising a family. The researcher continued to be obedient but turned some of his energy toward a non-profit organization formed in the city called The Center of Hope. This group obtained a 501C3, proceeding to apply for and receiving grants that focused on a host of issues dealing with the community. Some of these were health, tutoring, male and female mentoring, and housing. He served on the board of directors and also led a male mentoring group. This non-profit organization eventually obtained, through grants, a million dollar budget. He was still dealing with the call when he became chairman of the board of directors of this group. The Lord continued to speak to his heart with regard to the church and his role in ministry. He continued to resist and focused on the Center of Hope. Christ Revival Temple Church began to consider dissolving, due in part to the pastor. The church at this time still had close to 40 members, including children. The pastor was unable to advance the ministry due to his job and the distance he lived from the church. The researcher saw this church begin to fall apart and today he does not believe in long distance pastoring. All agreed to the events that followed and plans were put in motion to disperse the assets. The church gave \$16,000 dollars to various charities and sold the building. The Curry family left on good terms with the people of Christ Revival Temple and joined Lexington Christian Fellowship Church.



### **Lexington Christian Fellowship**

This church was started by a young pastor and had been together for six months when the Curry family united with this ministry. The church grew to over 100 members in this short period of time. The family attended a few services and the researcher requested time to talk with the pastor. The Reverend explained his vision and what he foresaw for the church. He envisioned a church school and daycare, and was open to new ideas that would benefit the community. Bible study was held at the house of members and the researcher requested that he visit his home so they could talk. This was the first time that the researcher revealed the call from God to preach and lead. The Reverend informed him that he would allow the researcher to preach a trial sermon and eventually assume the role of youth minister. The researcher believed in his heart that God was placing him there to further the ministry. All went well as the church continued to grow and the researcher assumed the role of Sunday school teacher and bible study teacher. The researcher informed the pastor that he planned to enroll at Hood Theological Seminary to continue his preparation for the task ahead. The pastor encouraged the researcher to pursue the Master of Divinity degree. Everything was going well when another crisis appeared in the ministry life of the researcher. The last day that he saw the Reverend alive was at a bible study on a Wednesday night. The following day he received word that the Reverend had been found dead in his law office. This news devastated him and once again he re-evaluated his role in ministry. He had yet to preach a trial sermon and the man who was to be his mentor had died. He began to pray often for the Lord to tell him what to do. The church was in a mini-crisis without a leader and began to use various preachers to lead the worship service on Sunday. Just a few months later, to his amazement and objection, they

called a new pastor. The majority of the people, with the endorsement of the former pastor's wife, selected a new leader. The researcher responded by being obedient to the process and the new pastor. The new pastor allowed him to preach a trial sermon and six months later he entered the seminary. Although the family was unhappy with this situation, they did their part to advance this ministry. The researcher and the new Reverend became friends, although the researcher did not believe he was the right man for this church. The church almost immediately began to have problems. There was a group that tried to make the new pastor's life in the church miserable because of his leadership style. The researcher attended a trustee meeting where one member of the board stood and called the pastor a liar to his face in front of all the trustees. The researcher was appalled at this type of behavior, knowing that it would damage the ministry and create walls of resentment. The Reverend remained calm during this episode and gained respect from the researcher in handling this matter. There were other incidents that made this ministry situation difficult. The pastor had a dominant personality and would try to change some things in the church to benefit his agenda. The practice of telling the membership how bad they were from the pulpit disturbed the researcher. He would preach a good message and then spoil it with a tongue lashing due to frustration. The family remained loyal to this ministry, praying that God would help us make the right decision whether to stay or leave the church. Meanwhile, the researcher began taking classes at Hood Theological Seminary.

### **Hood Theological Seminary**

Hood Theological Seminary was a challenge for the researcher spiritually, mentally, and physically. During the first year of seminary, he worked seven days a week, served as chairman of the board of directors in the Center of Hope, attended classes on

Thursday evenings and all day on Saturday. The course load was intense and he knew that some changes had to be made. After much prayer and mediation, he decided to resign from the Center of Hope and reduce his involvement in the church while he attended seminary. The researcher had made a promise to God that he would make the best grades possible. Seminary was a challenge for him because of the many views that had been acquired over the years from attending various churches. The one thing that seminary did for him was to explore other possibilities in interpreting the bible. This experience allowed him to grow spiritually and learn many new ways to be effective in the church.

### **The Context And Me**

The choice for this project was based on the life of the researcher from childhood to adulthood. The researcher attended a small rural church named First Baptist Church Southmont where the pastor served for 41 years. This church and community was the place where many seeds were planted in the youth of this researcher. The church was a part of life on Sunday and everyday of the week for his family. The researcher was brought into contact with other neighbors who were members of the church. Most of the people were related who lived in this small community.

The researcher specifically remembers a Reverend who was his cousin and an associate minister at the church. He was probably eighty years old at this time but still drove his car and visited family and friends regularly.

This Reverend was a man who spent time with the researcher as a boy. He was considered to be an expert on the planting and growing of watermelons. Whenever the watermelons in the researcher's garden were big, he asked his mother to call the Reverend to come and check them for ripeness. He could tap them with his finger and determine

their ripeness. The Reverend would talk about life and inquired as to how life was in the researcher's world. The researcher does not ever remember him saying a bad word about anyone. He regularly led prayer service and preached when necessary. He had a glow about him that always shone.

There were also two deacons who lived within walking distance of his home. These men were highly regarded and respected in the church and the community. One deacon had a big pecan tree in his yard that drew all the kids in the neighborhood. Whenever you visited him, he talked about life and asked about your family. He was a deeply religious man who lived a simple life dedicated to church and family. The researcher remembered a time when he rode through the area on his bike and stopped to talk. The deacon was chopping wood and explained that the older you get the harder it became to do that kind of work. This deacon would talk of how the Lord had blessed him and he was thankful. This man would keep an eye on the children in the neighborhood and report any misconduct to their parents. The researcher remembers him and the example he exhibited through his lifestyle.

The other deacon lived beside his family in the next house. He was a Christian man who people looked to for leadership in the neighborhood. On one occasion, there was potential trouble in an unoccupied house where noises were heard. His uncle sent for this deacon because he would know what to do. Minutes later he came into the yard with his shotgun in hand ready to investigate the situation. Everyone felt safe with him around knowing that he would always help if needed. These are some of the men who helped to shape some of the values in this researcher.

The marriage to Tammy had a somewhat positive effect on the researcher's continuing swings from positive to negative situations. His father and grandfather had

stressed the importance of family since he was a child. He was a good provider but still had a tendency to hang out with his friends. A major turning point was the emergence of cocaine as the drug of choice. Many of his friends were using cocaine on a regular basis and they began to pressure him to try it. The fact that he had a good job meant that he could purchase these drugs. He began to distance himself from these people because he had a wife and newborn baby. He very much wanted to be a good father and husband who worked hard for his family. One Saturday night, his friends talked him into going out for a couple of hours. They went to what he called a hole-in-the-wall club and, in a matter of twenty minutes, he was ready to go home. He relayed this message to the driver of the car and soon became upset when his request went unanswered. He decided that it was time to go home and he walked ten blocks thinking that he would change his lifestyle. This was a very important decision on his journey to the life he lived as a child because the seed of salvation that had been planted started to germinate.

Tammy was attending church on a fairly consistent basis and the researcher attended on most of the Sundays. The name of church was Union Chapel Methodist Church and it was located in Churchland, North Carolina. This was a church that had broken away from the A.M.E. Zion church, but the worship style had a Pentecostal flair and lively presentation. His spiritual growth began in this atmosphere and the service had a powerful impact on him. He still remained passive and unresponsive outwardly, even though on some occasions he was shouting on the inside. Tithing became an important part of his spiritual growth. His eyes began to open and a commitment to serve the Lord was made on an immediate level. The church eventually returned to the A.M.E. Zion denomination after losing a court battle in their effort to stay independent. The researcher

and his wife were disturbed by these events and left the church, relocating to a new ministry formed by the now displaced pastor called Christ Revival Temple.

Fifteen people began worshipping together and Christ Revival Temple started in a rented building. This church had a powerful worship experience that allowed the researcher to blossom into a totally committed Christian. He remembers very clearly the day that he fully submitted to the love of God. The pastor had finished preaching and the call to discipleship was made. He asked for people to come forward for prayer and any other need. The Reverend prayed and the researcher began to praise God and allowed the spirit to use him to the glory of God. This was the watershed experience that began his quest to serve the Lord in whatever way necessary to advance the kingdom of God. He served this church as Sunday school teacher, trustee, and ordained deacon for four years. Toward the end of year three, he was speaking at various churches and attending many local revivals. It was at this time that the Lord began to speak to him spiritually. He would pray to God because he felt in his spirit that the Lord had a job for him with regard to his role in the ministry. The message appeared to be one of ascending to the role of preacher or pastor. This was something he took very seriously but never told anyone, not even his wife. He prayed to the Lord that he had done everything to advance the teachings of Jesus and was happy in the position of deacon where he could do service in the church. A few years earlier, he never would imagine that the Lord would deal with him in this manner.

Meanwhile, he and his wife were going through a storm. Their second son, Keith Jr., was not progressing normally in his speech development and fine motor functions. The doctor agreed and referred them to a clinic in Winston Salem, North Carolina for tests. Keith Jr. was tested all day and they were taken to the office for the test results. The news devastated them because the doctor said that his I.Q. was estimated to be sixty-nine,

indicating slight retardation. They left the clinic with heavy hearts and cried later at home for their son. After the initial shock, they began to pray for God to give them strength to do what would be necessary to help their son. They refused to claim the diagnosis issued by these doctors. The researcher was convinced that their spiritual development to this point allowed them to help their son and they knew that God could affect the outcome to any situation. Their faith never wavered during this time and a plan was developed to help their son. They hired someone to work with him twice a week on the speech problem. This was expensive but they sacrificed to ensure that he continued these sessions. They also learned of a program that existed in the Developmental Center specifically designed to work with preschoolers on fine motor problems and speech. The short yellow bus came to get him five times a week. This cycle continued for eighteen months and Keith Jr. started kindergarten on time. The speech pathologist continued to come in the evenings for an additional year. When this time was completed, Keith Jr. was reading and writing at grade level. The grades he received were consistently good and their proudest moment occurred at a program preceding his seventh school year. He praised God for all the blessings that were bestowed upon his family during those years. The family was at school on this day to pin him for earning the honor of being accepted into the Beta Club. The Beta club was the National Honor Society for middle school students. While placing the pin his son, the researcher thought to himself what a mighty God they served. A few days later, they sent a letter to the clinic explaining that their diagnosis was wrong and enclosing a copy of the Beta Club certificate.

Things continued to deteriorate at Lexington Christian Fellowship primarily due to the leadership. The pulpit became a place to preach negative presentations aimed at some members. The family was very unhappy and the researcher confided in the Reverend who

instructed him in supervised ministry at the seminary. He called a Reverend in Greensboro to find out if it would be possible for the researcher to do field study at Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church. The researcher met the Reverend and he agreed to be the supervisor during the semester of this class. The pastor took the family in with open arms and extended a warm welcome. He met with all the ministers and taught practical things relevant to serving in God's church. The family joined Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church after attending the church for a year. The time at Gethsemane was a blessing because this pastor had a good administrative process in place and he shared his expertise. He licensed the researcher and recommended to the Rowan Baptist Association that he be ordained. This happened in 1998 and the researcher began preaching at various churches. Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church called him and he accepted. This blessing had to come from God in that the church was located four miles from where the researcher lived. He was able to pastor and do ministry in the community where he lived.

The people who take the time to show you the way often shape the life that you live. God builds servants who become spiritual giants in a world that is led by material possessions and self-preservation. Many strong men in the researcher's life have shaped the life that God blessed him to live. These were men who had direct access to this pastor as a child and adult. They taught the importance of God, family, and friends. This list of men is long and their influence started at the age of three. This all took place in a small community where many of the neighbors had a love for God in common.

The two most direct influences on the researcher's life were his father and grandfather. They helped to plant the seed of faith through actions, deeds, stories, and living a Christian life. His grandfather lived to the ripe old age of eighty-nine. He was a Christian man who served on the deacon board of his church for over fifty years. The



researcher and his sister often stayed overnight with their grandparents. They were married for sixty years until he passed a few short years ago. "Papap" was a gentle soul who stressed the importance of family and the responsibilities of providing for them. He often told the researcher that he was the last male Curry and the desire he had for the researcher to marry with the union producing a son. "Papap" gave the researcher advice saying that married couples should always sleep together and never go to bed angry. Settle the dispute before the sun goes down so it will not fester into something that divides the family. There was one true story that he told the researcher on responsibility. It occurred during the time that white men could kill a black man and not be charged for the crime. He was at home when a male friend came to him for help one winter night. The man had been cornered and shot a white man to escape. This man wanted my grandfather to drive him across town so he could flee the city. The pain on his face was very evident as he explained why he refused to grant the request. Grandfather had a wife and three babies who needed him and this situation had the signs of a potential tragedy. The man left and received the help of a deacon who lived on the next block. This man granted the request and drove the hunted man across town. The white mob came to the neighborhood and someone revealed that the deacon had left the area in his car earlier that night. The mob called him out and the deacon panicked running from the mob. He was gunned down with his body left for the neighborhood blacks to bury. Grandfather explained that, although he wanted to help, his wife and children needed him. The lesson was that family must often be the first consideration. The researcher often thinks of how his grandfather raised five kids working for very little money in a furniture factory. He would say that God blessed and provided a way for him to feed and clothe his family. My father learned these lessons

and worked hard to raise his kids with a better start to their adult life by sending the researcher to college.

Marriage in the researcher's life meant being responsible for the wife and children. The aim being that the children might grow into strong adults. The researcher suffered some growing pains but emerged to seek the peace and belief in God that was prevalent in his father and grandfather. All three of the researcher's sons have been raised with the seed of faith being planted at an early age. One son just became co-pastor of a seed church in Raleigh, North Carolina. The second son did missionary work in Honduras in the spring of 2002 and will be attending the World Baptist Youth Congress in 2003. This event was to be held in Hong Kong and included eight days of missionary work in China. The emphasis on faith and family responsibility, along with Christian examples, can make a difference in the life journey.

The researcher became the sixth pastor in the history of the church located on Linwood-Southmont Road when the church called him on the first Sunday in December 2000. The blessing and circumstances of the invitation to pastor the church was an emotional event in his life. This was the home church of family members on his grandmother's side. Her mother, father, sisters, and some brothers were buried in the cemetery of Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church. The researcher had been present for revivals at this church for many years. The church setting at Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church presented many challenges to remain relevant to the needs of the community and the Lexington area where most of the members reside.

Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church can be found in the same area where the church was founded. The church has five acres of land that include the parcel which was signed over by the mother church New Smith Grove a few years ago. The community

around the church has changed and there are many housing developments within a two-mile radius. The church is eight miles from the city limits of Lexington and 85% of the congregation lives there. Only a few members live within a 3-mile drive to the church and these people reside on property owned by their families for several generations. The other 14% percent live in counties as far away as 50 miles. Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church has approximately 80 members on roll with 25 actively involved in the church. The make-up of the congregation is 70% female. There are also 15 children who attend, with 5 to 7 who come on a regular basis. Teenagers number 5 to 10 and attendance on Sunday has been 3 to 5. The church has two ordained deacons and one deaconess who are between the ages of 60 to 70 years old. The deacons are men and have served on the board for 30 and 15 years respectively. This church can be described as a family ministry because 90% of the congregation is related. The two large families in the church are the Holts and the Hargraves. These are the same families that came from the Holt and Hargrave plantations during the post-Civil-War period.

The problem in the church was the lack of youth ministry and structure. The lack of male youth involvement and attendance in the church was disturbing based on the strong male influence that was present during the researcher's childhood and teenage years. The numbers of males who attend Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church show a lack of focus on male youth development. Therefore, this project focused on male youth development in the church that provides a biblical and social model at the foundational level. An agenda for action that focused on male teenagers was developed and implemented to produce change. The researcher believed that mentors and role models who lived the Christian life could plant the seeds of faith. These seeds of faith can lead to

spiritual development in these male teenagers. Spiritual development will lead to an active faith that grows through encouragement and participation.

The researcher chose a youth ministry project based on the findings in his Spiritual Autobiography. The literature below was divided into three areas. Preaching was the major vehicle used to promote positive change in the groups that make up the church. Many books exist on preaching and leadership. Some of the books recommended by the mentors have been used because of their content. The project focus required leadership in all phases of implementation. Lastly, this youth ministry project addresses a need at Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL**

**John Killinger**

*Fundamentals of Preaching* is a comprehensive textbook on preaching. Killinger has produced a book that covers all aspects of the preparation and delivery of a sermon. The chapter on illustrating the sermon is very good. “It is hard to imagine Christian preaching without the power and beauty of images—both those from the Bible and those from the preacher’s own experience.”<sup>1</sup> Painting a picture in sermons is very important when you consider that present generations are influenced by what they see. Young people watch videos on MTV and the images, along with the song, normally contain a message. Sermons rich in narratives that reveal a biblical truth along with a relevant application informs the congregation. Killinger also explains the various benefits and usages of illustrations in the sermon.<sup>2</sup>

**Olin P. Moyd**

*Preaching and Theology in the African American Tradition* by Dr. Olin Moyd is a wonderful book that is essential for the pastor in this day and time. The book focuses on preaching and practical theology from the African American perspective. A key thesis

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<sup>1</sup>John Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 117.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 119-144.

statement in the book says: "Preaching is the vehicle and theology is content."<sup>3</sup> A theology of preaching affirms that preaching is the primary medium to God's revelation, says Moyd. This theology addresses our particular condition and need. "Practical theology responds in the affirmative through the preached Word."<sup>4</sup> He has a chapter that describes the history of literary black theology. "Black theology is a reflection upon the meaning and message of the Christian faith community of the underprivileged and the oppressed."<sup>5</sup> Dr. Moyd makes clear the need to preach theology from a practical point of view. Practical theology examines the biblical mandate and the present human condition and attempts to correlate the two.<sup>6</sup> Practical theology characterizes the bridge between the Christian message of hope and the human situation both generally and specifically. Dr. Moyd also has chapters on preaching and celebration, preaching the whole counsel, empowering the people, and the future of the God we preach. The book reinforces the approach used by this researcher to build sermons for this project.

### Spencer Johnson

*Who Moved My Cheese?* is a very short book with a powerful message containing ways to deal with change in your work and in your life. It has four characters with two little people and two mice. The two groups spend their day looking for cheese within the many alleys. The cheese is important because it represents the ability of the groups to obtain goals set in life. They have success each day until one morning they realize that the

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<sup>3</sup>Olin Moyd, *The Sacred Art* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995), 11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 35.

cheese supply has been exhausted. Sniff and Scurry moved on to find new cheese while Hem and Haw come back for days to the same place looking for cheese. Sniff and Scurry do find new cheese that is better than what they have eaten in the past. They enjoy the new cheese while Hem and Haw waste days complaining about the change in the area around their home. The book gives thought to the different attitudes that develop when change happens. The author reinforces his point with some principles regarding change. The main meaning of the book is that change can cause you to expand and grow. It enables the reader to paint a picture of “New Cheese” that all will want to pursue. This is a great tool that all youth ministers in the church should read and reflect upon. The book exposes the resistance due to unfamiliarity that many people have regarding change. This resistance causes a stagnation of effectiveness in the church and all of life’s endeavors.

### John Maxwell

Becoming the person others will want to follow is a theme in *The 21 Indispensable Qualities Of A Leader*. The key to transforming yourself from someone who understands leadership to a person who successfully leads in the real world is character.<sup>7</sup> Chapter one deals with character and is called “Be a Piece of the Rock.” Character is one of the 21 qualities that make up this book. They are all very helpful to the preacher who desires to show leadership in the church. There are two qualities that stand out for this researcher and will be outlined briefly. They are “relationships,” and “problem solving,” which determine the direction that most churches advance in kingdom building.

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<sup>7</sup> Maxwell, *21 Indispensable Qualities*, 1.

“People do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care.”<sup>8</sup>

A relational leader must have the ability to understand how people feel and think. Maxwell reminds us that all people have some things in common:

- They like to feel special, so sincerely compliment them.
- They want a better tomorrow, so show the hope.
- They desire direction, so navigate for them.
- They are selfish, so speak to their needs first.
- They get low emotionally, so encourage them.
- They want success, so help them win.<sup>9</sup>

Recognizing these truths, a leader must still be able to treat people as individuals.<sup>10</sup>

These are great principles and allow the preacher to connect with the youth creating relational success.

You can measure a leader by the problems he or she tackles, because they always look for one their own size.<sup>11</sup> Maxwell has a set of common sense principles that are necessary to solve complex problems that emerge in the church. One principle that this researcher believes essential to solving problems is to see the big picture. Do not get bogged down in details and emotions. Maxwell has a method called “teach” that is a good way to view things when solving problems.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 95.



- Time—spend time to discover the real issue.
- Exposure—find out what others have done.
- Assistance—have you studied all angles.
- Creativity—brainstorm multiple solutions.
- Hit It—implement the best solution.

Maxwell has written a book that will help us in our quest to be better leaders. This book has many other good points that can aid in youth development. It gives the pastor many key suggestions for becoming effective.

The review now moves to the books that have been written that address youth ministry in the church today. Although none of these books deal with the researcher's project specifically, they do offer information useful to this researcher in designing his project.

### **Jawanaza Kunjufu**

Any project designed to address black male teenagers should consider the books written by Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu. His understanding of the black family unit and youth development is well known. Jawanza Kunjufu writes a book titled *Restoring the Village, Values, and Commitment*. Kunjufu begins this book in a negative way by illustrating many of the problems in the black community through stories of specific situations. From Chapter Two on, he uses scripture to begin each new section. It is frightening to consider the words of Kunjufu when he says, among other things, that some black kids have never seen an adult in the home work. The chapter is entitled "The First Generation" and contains scripture from Isaiah 3:4-5. The opening scripture telling of the Lord allowing the

people to be governed by immature boys sounds like a current newspaper.<sup>12</sup> He moves through a host of family issues including the lack of basic home training for kids. Motherhood, fatherhood, childhood, and the key to family values are dealt with in the book.

The chapter on childhood begins with scripture from Deuteronomy 6:7 and three others. The scripture from Deuteronomy is one that this researcher uses to establish a biblical basis for this project. During childhood, our kids either have too little or too much materialism.<sup>13</sup> Academics and the effects of white supremacy on our children are defined as a factor to positive growth in our young people. Kunjufu also talks about the possible solutions for restoring the family unit or village. This is a great book with a lot of scripture at the beginning of each chapter. Dr. Kunjufu reinforces the validity of this project with many comments on the need for God and the living Word.

*Hip-Hop vs. MATT* is a psycho/social analysis of values among our youth. The term hip-hop is derived from an early New York rapper named "Lovebug Starski."<sup>14</sup> MATT is expressed in the seven virtues of righteousness, truth, justice, harmony, balance, reciprocity, and order. "MATT is the right way, or path of righteousness. It is in recognition of the moral ecology of shared commitment."<sup>15</sup> The chapters in this book that warranted the attention of the researcher were Chapters One and Three. They provided manna to the preacher and adult seeking a better understanding of the society that we live

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<sup>12</sup>Jawanza Kunjufu, *Restoring The Village, Values, And Commitment: Solutions for The Black Family* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 1996), 27.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 104.

<sup>14</sup>Jawanza Kunjufu, *Hip-Hop vs. MATT, a PSYCHO Analysis of Values* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 1993), 2.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 3.

in. Chapter Two discusses the value system of the hip-hop generation. This is an intriguing chapter because the preacher cannot address a problem that he or she does not understand. This researcher firmly believes that if no effort is made to understand the values internalized by our youth, no plan of action can be designed and implemented.

The chapter on values covers many different topics that are highly relevant to the present generation. Work ethic, money, materialism, sexual conquest, principles, trust, honesty, identity, self-determination, extended family, revenge, and responsibility are some of the topics in this chapter. These topics have a story contained in each to make a point in the discussion. They cause you to wonder why this generation thinks this way.

Chapter Three is the one that presents when and how values are taught. Kunjufu believes that values require a foundation and they have to be internalized. He states that the best place to anchor your values is in the Lord.<sup>16</sup> The rest of the chapter is written based on the aforementioned statement. This researcher agrees with Kunjufu that understanding this generation is the first step to creating a program that establishes wholeness. The exposure to the Lord and the benefits of the Christian faith allow the youth to weigh situations that create a negative value system. The researcher designed this project to inform male teenage youth and lay the foundation that Kunjufu speaks of in this chapter. The remainder of the books in this review will address youth ministry projects and the usefulness of material to this project.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 75.

**Charles R. Foster & Grant S. Shockley**

*Working with Black Youth* presents opportunities for Christian ministry to black youth. The authors begin by giving the history of black religious involvement dating back to the post-Civil-War period. They then elaborate on the psychosocial experiences of black youth. They talk about the structural oppression of African Americans in society.<sup>17</sup> This researcher presumes that all of this history is intended to show the negative influences on black youth. They talk of a theological framework with mention of James Cone and the development of black theology. All of this is good information, but how does it help the problem of working with black youth? This researcher believes that this history is important, but an effort must be made to move forward with God leading the people through difficult times into the land of milk and honey.

Chapter Four is titled "Retrieving Intergenerational and Intercultural Faith." The authors say that the contemporary social situation demands that the church retrieve its militant heritage as an arena for dialogue on any moral, political, economic, and spiritual issues confronting black identity formation.<sup>18</sup> This researcher does not believe that this course of action is what our black youth need at this time. It should be recognized that this book was written in 1989 and the approach appears outdated. Racism is done in a more low key way now and, without the proper issue to address a specific problem, you lose credibility. The church can do more by promoting the opportunities that are present for our youth to move past obstacles that appear in the night. This book seems to have been

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<sup>17</sup>Charles Foster & Grant Shockley, *Working with Black Youth* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 31.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 89.

written from frustration. This researcher needs ideas that will develop character based on the biblical blueprint which in turn will encourage change and spiritual growth.

They do finally address the elements of a black youth ministry in the last chapter of this book. A primary purpose for black youth ministry is to call youth into discipleship.<sup>19</sup> Their second point calls for clarifying one's cultural heritage because the call of Christ comes through the experiences of people in cultural and historical communities. This appears to be correct and reminds this researcher of the words of the great preacher Olin Moyd who recommends a practical theology from the pulpit. The youth of this world need a theology that speaks to their everyday situations in life. The last chapter is worthwhile to read, but overall this book has too much of an angry tone.

### **James C. Perkins**

*Building Up Zion's Walls* discusses ways to empower the African American Family. Dr. Perkins has three chapters in this book that are relevant to the researcher's project. They are: "Reaching Black Males"; "Faith Development in the Family"; and "Models for Youth Ministry." "Reaching Black Males" begins with scripture to justify the need for ministry to Black males.<sup>20</sup> Some of the scripture cited is used in the biblical foundation piece of this dissertation. The end of the chapter has a question and answer section along with statements designed to stimulate thinking in the area of male youth ministry.

The chapter on "Faith Development in the Family" also begins with scripture and focuses on some of the societal ills of the twenty-first century. It then outlines some

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>20</sup>James Perkins, *Building Up Zion's Wall* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999), 3-8.

solutions with each tied to a process of faith development. It provides a model developed by the Stephens that states, among other things, that there must be some type of support for the children that will bring them to the age of accountability.<sup>21</sup>

Lastly, Perkins deals with “Models for Youth Ministry” and once again uses scripture to validate the direction of the models. It contains space for you to respond as it relates to the ministry at your church. One of the statements the researcher agrees with is: “We are trying to reach out and attract children and teens who are immersed in a new culture and a new language, and who embrace a totally new set of values.”<sup>22</sup> This sounds a lot like the postmodern world described by the researcher in the historical piece. This book has a lot more to offer anyone serious about youth ministry. It is a work that excites the researcher because of the topics as they relate to his project. Although the approach is different, Dr. Perkins has written a helpful book for stimulating thinking in this area. A must for all pastors in developing an effective strategy for spiritual development in today’s male youth.

### **Donald Ratcliff and James A. Davies**

*Handbook of Youth Ministry* has many contributors but is edited by Donald Ratcliff and James A. Davies. There are two chapters in the book that this researcher would like to review: “Adolescents and Religion,” and “Procedures in the Religious Education of Adolescents.” Both of these offer information that can be translated into useful material for the project of this pastor.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 15-17.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 28.

Kenneth Hyde is the author of the chapter entitled “Adolescents and Religion.” He points out that adolescence is a time of personal choices in the life of our children. He makes many good points on the influences during youth development. One example of this: “for some adolescents, belief develops into a committed faith, for others it fades and dies, while for some it may remain dormant as a seed waiting for the right conditions to stimulate germination.”<sup>23</sup> This researcher can certainly relate to the words of Mr. Hyde. Seed planting is the primary responsibility of the family and church. Mr. Hyde also discusses religious behavior, attitudes to religion, religious experience, religious conversion, and religious beliefs. This chapter contains many topics that help to understand youth ministry. This chapter can only be rated as excellent and a must read for any one serious about this type of work.

James Michael Lee writes the chapter on “Procedures in Religious Education” and says that youth ministry is a part of religious education.<sup>24</sup> Lee says that many youth ministers do not see themselves as religious educators because they view it as a school-based process that is heavily teacher directed. He spends a great deal of time in the chapter defining and comparing religious education to youth ministry with the strengths of a combined effort. This researcher agrees with Mr. Lee that religious education in the youth group can take the form of object lessons, storytelling, and many other creative ideas to build spiritual formation in the group. The focus of this dissertation project depends heavily on Christian Education to be a part of the effort to increase spiritual development in male youth. He is correct in the statements and case that he builds in this chapter. This

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<sup>23</sup>Donald Ratcliff and James Davies, *Handbook of Youth Ministry* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1991), 119.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 214.

review only addresses a small portion of this book, but it is a great read for many other issues of youth ministry. The authors have a work that contains quality research that can aid any project that is in the developmental stages. It also will help the youth minister who needs direction based on the context in which he or she does ministry.

### **Doug Fields**

*Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* cites nine essential foundations for healthy growth.

The author states that his goal for the book is to present a plan for a healthy youth ministry that is not dependent on one great youth worker. This sentence aroused my curiosity because many youth leaders suffer burnout because of a lack of support. The researcher has seen this happen in a church where a dedicated person resigned the position. Fields says that a purpose-driven youth ministry has five characteristics: evangelism, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry. It contains a structure that reflects the above-mentioned purposes. The nine foundational components for a healthy youth ministry are:

- The Power of God (working through leaders with a pure heart).
- Purpose (discovering why your ministry exists and follow it up with leadership).
- Potential audience (identifying which students are the targets for the purpose).
- Programs (deciding what programs will reach your potential audience).
- Process (displaying your programs so you can help students in spiritual maturity).
- Planned Values (defining what values will strengthen your ministry).



- Parents (teaming up with family for a stronger youth ministry and church).
- Participating Leaders (finding volunteers and developing them into ministers).
- Perseverance (learning how to survive the overwhelming responsibilities, discipline problems, and the adventure of change).<sup>25</sup>

Some of these foundational principles were helpful in designing this project. The rest of this particular book review will address one or two of these principles. “Potential audience” is important in that this project addresses black teenage youth in the rural church and how to increase spiritual development. This chapter primarily deals with an existing program and how to make it more efficient. The potential audience that he refers to are places where the unchurched can receive an invitation to attend a specific program. He does mention the potential benefit of rewards in youth ministry programs. This researcher believes that potential rewards offer an opportunity for youth to be exposed to a program designed to meet their spiritual and everyday needs. The section on how to design a purpose driven ministry after the audience has been identified contains many ideas that are helpful. It is important to consider the topic he outlines in the design phase. One should consider the direction of the church, the available time of the leaders, the amount of adult help, and the accessible resources. All these were important in putting together the model this researcher has developed. This book does not address the researcher’s problem specifically, but has many suggestions that help to increase the rate of success for the ministry project to be implemented.

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<sup>25</sup>Doug Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 19-22.

### **Keith Ignatius**

“Youth Ministry Reflection” is written and published in the *American Baptist Quarterly* Volume 17 (1998). Keith has spent 60% of his time training adults who work with young people. He tells a story of a Polish plumber from a conservative church. The youth ministry lab lasted a week and this man did not understand what was going on. Finally at the end of the week, this man confessed that he finally understood that youth ministry is not a program, but people accepting each other and trying to help each other. This is the story ending that this researcher hopes for as he works with men and women in the church. Youth leaders must accept people as they are and show the love of God to them. Keith describes<sup>26</sup> that he spends a lot of time distributing youth ministry resources to various churches. This researcher believes that people like Keith are necessary because of the resources that they provide to the church. It makes sense to seek out individuals who can help you succeed in this important work. This little article is included because of the need to use any resource available to learn and move the ministry forward.

### **Kenda Creasy Dean**

This article, entitled “Youth Ministry for the Twenty-First Century Church,” begins by making observations of the church in the sixties and the effects it had on youth ministry. The youth of the church at that time were teenagers being sent to places such as Vietnam with orders to kill. The Civil Rights movement sought involvement from youth

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<sup>26</sup> Keith Ignatius, “Youth Ministry Reflections,” *American Baptist Quarterly*, Volume 17 (1998).

who, in essence, had been put on hold by American institutions.<sup>27</sup> Dean further states that this millennium generation still fails to participate in most mainline Protestant churches. Through the first few pages of this article, nothing new emerges to add to the information this author has accumulated.

Dean uses prime time television to make her point. "On *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, teenagers who are threatened by (what else?) vampires turn to an adolescent vampire slayer to save them."<sup>28</sup> Her point is that salvation is meted out in heavy doses of loyalty and grace from peers. Dean says that in the absence of theological guidance from the community of faith, adolescents are left to evaluate salvation through relationships.<sup>29</sup> This writer does not believe the picture of teenagers in this society is as dim as stated by Dean. Having said all that is written above and much more, Dean moves to her vision of a successful youth ministry.

The youth ministry must have a foundation that emphasizes the significance of salvation in the formation of self. "Millennial youth will forever be scarred by Columbine High School, just as generations before them were marked by Vietnam, Kent State, and Watergate."<sup>30</sup> Ministry that protects youth for the "church of tomorrow" seems irrelevant when youth are staring into the end of a gun. What is needed, Dean says, are ministries that can help youth articulate the deeper question: "What must I do to be saved?" The youth ministry must seek to shape the soul and not merely behavior and is based on

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<sup>27</sup>Kendra Creasy Dean, "Proclaiming Salvation Youth Ministry for the Twenty-First Century Church," *Theology-Today* 56 January (2000), 525.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 527.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 529.

Christian practice and Doctrine. This writer agrees that the most important point in youth ministry is to shape the soul by planting seeds that leads to salvation. Any project of youth ministry should have this element included. She includes a poem written by a student at a nearby school, days before the Columbine shootings.

I am smart and strong  
I wonder if there is life beyond ours.  
I hear a mime scream.  
I see a war with no bloodshed.  
I want to live forever.  
I am smart and strong.  
I pretend that I am someone else.  
I feel like drinking from the Milky Way.  
I touch God's halo and hold the Devil's hand.  
I worry about the day when family dies.  
I cry for I know that all good things must come to an end.  
I am smart and strong.  
I understand people die.  
I say fighting is childish.  
I dream of a world with no pain.  
I try to be all that I know I can.  
I hope to be a better person as an adult.  
I am smart and strong.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Author unnamed, *Life*, July 1999, 18.

This poem demonstrates the importance of youth-adult relationships that are critical to identity formation. This writer believes with all his heart that these relationships must be made to imprint our biblically-based life in the communities in which we live and in our churches. The rest of Dean's article contains some principles of salvation through the written Word with adult examples. She even mentions the importance of a practical theology. This article provides good points to help in the development of this new generation. It did touch this researcher based on his childhood which provided some of the developmental relationships that she describes.

### **Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster**

The book has been described as "The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry." Dean, who is cited in the article above, has written a book with Ron Foster that has a chapter that is relevant to the researcher's project. The chapter is entitled "God Bearing Practices For Youth Ministry." They make a statement in the Preface that should be quoted. "Adolescents are looking for a soul-shaking, heart-waking, world-changing God to fall in love; and if they do not find that God in the Christian church, they will most certainly settle for lesser gods elsewhere."<sup>32</sup> This statement is describing the post-modern context that our youth interact.

The authors spend some time emphasizing that the youth director should be spiritual due to the fact that compassion, wisdom, and discernment in the ways of God are

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<sup>32</sup> Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, *The Godbearing Life* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1998).

needed to be effective.<sup>33</sup> The authors chart some ways to trigger spiritual development in today's youth. Small groups are suggested to discuss spiritual development with the pastor acting as facilitator. They have excellent exercises at the end of the chapter to stimulate thinking in how this chapter can help your ministry. These authors write a work that this researcher can use since one of the goals of this project is to trigger spiritual development.

### Mark DeVries

*Family-Based Youth Ministry* is written to reach the “been-there-done-that” generation. There are other reasons that the author mentions for writing this book, but the one that captured the researcher's interest is as follows: “It is written for anyone responsible for a Christian ministry to teenagers.”<sup>34</sup> This project addresses ministry to black male teenagers, and this researcher reviewed this book looking for suggestions to make a teenage ministry successful. DeVries believes that churches overreact when a problem with the youth ministry surfaces. Teenagers are isolated so the problem can be fixed. “Church leaders assume that by isolating the youth department into its own subgroup in the church, they would instill all the values necessary for youth to grow to mature Christian adulthood.”<sup>35</sup> DeVries feels that whatever the new model may be, it must take seriously the fact that teenagers grow toward mature Christian adulthood as they are connected to the total body of Christ. This researcher does not agree with DeVries and the

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<sup>33</sup>Dean and Foster, *Godbearing Life*, 142.

<sup>34</sup>Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 18.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 43.

above statements. Teenagers do grow as they are connected to the total body of Christ, but a structured program designed to reach them seems to be a good solution. The subgroup he speaks of could build confidence and excitement as they recognize their importance and worth to the church. Although this book may be helpful to some people, this researcher and the author have different visions as to how the teenage ministry can become a productive part of church life.

### **Mark H. Senter, Wesley, Chap Clark, and Nalan Nel**

The authors of *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church* have written a book that is based on a four-pronged approach. These four approaches to growth in the youth church are:

- The Inclusive Congregational approach
- The Missional approach
- The Preparatory approach
- The Strategic approach

These four approaches combine to form a developmental approach to youth ministry. This researcher is not creating a project that uses the missional approach. Therefore, the other three approaches were examined to evaluate their potential contribution to the design of the teenage ministry concept.

Each of the authors wrote on one of the four approaches. Nel writes about the inclusive approach and says it is about “finding a place for children and adolescents than about dreaming up new modes of ministry.”<sup>36</sup> Every ministry in the church is relevant to

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<sup>36</sup>Mark Senter, Wesley Black, Chap Clark, and Malan Nel, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), 6.

the youth and adults in the congregation. This statement cannot be argued by anyone who does church work. All church programs should have a youth component to train the youth in how the church operates. This is agreeable to the beliefs of this researcher. However, the youth group needs a focus and objectives via a leader or visionary. Many small churches lack the organization to structure a program to do ministry in this way. Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church has a small membership and a small youth group. Training needs to take place within each group of the church to help this type of program succeed. Nel says that the absence of a comprehensive congregational approach has led to a negative evaluation of the congregation by children and adolescents. Again, Nel makes a good point that this negative impression will drive some youth away from the church. The rest of his presentation deals with a program that includes the youth in a healthy way to trigger spiritual growth and influence. Nel believes that leadership from the senior pastor is the logical starting point to change hearts and minds.

The Preparatory approach to youth ministry is written by Wesley Black. This approach can be defined as a specialized ministry to adolescents that prepares them to participate in the life of existing churches as leaders.<sup>37</sup> This is totally different from the project that this researcher is planning. This program implies that a foundation for youth ministry is already in place.

Mark Senter is the editor of this book and writes the chapter called "The Strategic Approach to Youth Ministry." The Strategic approach creates a community of leaders and youthful Christians that enable a church-based youth ministry to establish a new church to maintain a theological continuity while expressing faith in a community relevant to both

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 40.



Christ and culture.<sup>38</sup> This chapter is not related to the vision of the researcher but contains some great tips for making the above statement a reality. Mark writes a creative vision of youth ministry that can be described only as excellent. It is highly recommended by this writer as a must read for any youth minister.

### **Matthew Parker And Eugene Seals**

The book *planting seeds of hope* is written to reach a new generation of African Americans with the gospel. The book has three chapters that relate directly to the researcher's project. The first is entitled: "Ten of the Best Ways Black Men Can Inspire Our Youth." These are all common sense approaches that every youth worker should know.

- Talk to Them.
- Listen to Them.
- Practice What You Preach.
- Dedicate Time to the Youth of Your Community.
- Share Your Resources.
- Share Your Knowledge.
- Bring Your Job to the Hood.
- Treat Your Lady Like a Lady.
- Share Your Faith with Them.
- Create Your Own Form of Inspiration.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 117.

<sup>39</sup>Matthew Parker and Eugene Seals, *planting seeds of hope* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1998), 11-20.

These are simply values that any Christian should practice in their daily life. The researcher believes that the authors are correct and on the mark with this list. The researcher's youth contained all of these elements. This chapter only validates the need for the development of youth ministry projects that proceed this way.

Secondly, the authors have a chapter entitled: "Building a Youth Ministry That Works." National statistics indicate that over 80 percent of all Christians make a commitment to Christ before their eighteenth birthday.<sup>40</sup> It really opens one's eyes to the need to develop a ministry setting where faith development occurs. Key ingredients, according to the author, are Bible studies, academic enhancement, and creative expression. Lastly, a chapter called: "Never Give Up on Youth" concludes the book and discusses the changing times. This indirectly is talking about post-modernism. This is a great book that lines up with many of the books in this review.

### **Merton Strommen and Richard A. Hardel**

*Passing on the Faith* is a radical new model for youth and family ministry. How can saints increase the likelihood that our children will be committed to Jesus Christ and a life of service when they graduate from high school? The authors address this concern with a new paradigm. It consists of a partnership between congregation and family in which the primary responsibility for faith development is assumed by the parents.<sup>41</sup> This partnership involves ten characteristics that the authors have formulated as a foundation for this paradigm. These characteristics are:

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 163.

<sup>41</sup>Merton Strommen and Richard Hardel, *Passing on the Faith* (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2000), 9.

- Trusting in a personal Christ.
- Understanding grace and living in grace.
- Communing with God regularly.
- Demonstrating moral responsibility.
- Accepting responsibility and being in a congregation.
- Accepting authority and being personally responsible.
- Having a hopeful and positive attitude.
- Participating in the rituals of a Christian community.
- Engaging in mission and service.<sup>42</sup>

This new paradigm considers the four levels of influence that shape our youth in this society. They are family, congregation, community, and culture. It is a good concept that these authors have created and this researcher commends them on the vision they have for this youth program. The authors state that parental harmony is the starting point because the biggest factor to family disunity is martial discord. The authors have a good bit of data on situations that cause trouble in the family unit. They establish a way the church can become involved to nurture parents through classes to set boundaries in the family unit. This is a great chapter but it misses some of the other dynamics that occur in the family. The family may consist of one parent who comes to church occasionally. If the children come to church more than the parents or parent, usually with a grandmother, how will this approach work? Many families have one parent living in one town and another living somewhere else. The child may miss many Sundays to spend the weekend with a parent who does not attend church. This approach is excellent for a two-parent home if the

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 18.

church has elders (65 or older) willing to participate. Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church has a small congregation and this type of approach would be difficult.

The rest of this book is great and can be used to strengthen any youth ministry project. The other topics that use the ten characteristics as a foundation are the “Faith and God,” “Faith-Based Christian Education,” and “Culture Is Excellent” chapters.

### **Richard Dunn and Mark Senter**

*Reaching a Generation for Christ*<sup>43</sup> is a comprehensive guide to youth ministry. These men are the editors of the book with many writers contributing to various topics. The chapter that caused interest in this guide is the one entitled “How Can Mentors Be Used in Youth Ministry?” This project requires that mentors or context associates become involved for it to succeed. This chapter has material that can be used to motivate the people working in the area of youth ministry. The author recommends that mentor volunteers be trained before they embark on the journey of mentoring. They recommend that leaders work closely with parents to identify the right mentor to place with a youth. All of this material is good and helpful to the mentoring program. These suggestions can be used by any context to begin a program. Mentoring relations are defined along with the process for selecting a coordinator. They have six initiatives that are designed to aid the church in beginning their mentoring program. This chapter is geared toward a bigger, more organized church that has a solid infrastructure. Still, the information can be used in any church, big or small. The mentor is needed to guide our male youth into a potential life of peace with God and the world. The exposure to mentors in a structured

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<sup>43</sup> Richard Dunn and Mark Senter, *Reaching a Generation for Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1997).

environment can help to overcome the single family problem. Male mentors in the church who demonstrate a way of life that youth can compare to the worldly context in which they live, sow seeds that God will water and germinate. This section has all the information necessary to form an approach to mentoring. This book covers all aspects of youth ministry and provides ways to move any youth ministry forward to the desired goal set by the church.

### **Rodger Dudley**

This article is published by *Review of Religious Research*. “Youth Religious Commitment over Time: A Longitudinal Study of Retention” contains the results of a 10-year study of over 1500 middle-teenagers on church retention and dropout rates. “These facts were then correlated with information collected during the first year of the study on family background and religious beliefs and practices to develop predictions about what things in the lives of church-affiliated teenagers will influence whether they continue in the church or drop out of it as young adults.”<sup>44</sup> This particular study is done by the Seventh-Day Adventists, but this article also contains studies from other denominations. This article is written in the year 2000 and contains a treasure of data to consider when developing any youth program or project. Some of the tables created from this article will be shown in the appendix.

The study of over 1500 Seventh-Day Adventist youth revealed that the strongest influences on their intention to remain in the church included agreement with church standards, frequency of personal prayer, love expressed by church members, frequency of

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<sup>44</sup>Rodger Dudley, “Youth Religious Commitment Over Time: A Longitudinal Study Of Retention” *Review of Religious Research* 41 June (2000), 111.

church attendance, and the church meeting their spiritual needs. These teenagers are mailed the base questionnaire and 1688 (64%) respond, but 165 proved to be either not church members or in the wrong age group and were deleted from the study that was widely distributed throughout the United States and Canada.

One outcome measure is the response to the question of how frequently the young adult attends worship services at church. The results will be displayed in Appendix H. A second outcome measure is based on responses to the question: "Did you ever at some time in the past, drop out of church membership or stop attending services?" The variables and statistics can be found in this article.<sup>45</sup> The most telling aspect of the study is the methodology. This is the only study that the researcher found that followed a bi-national sample of teenagers every year for ten years. This study reaffirms the importance of home influences. Adolescents whose biological families remain intact, whose father and mother both attend church frequently, and who participate in family worship are more likely to remain committed to the family faith when they reach adulthood.<sup>46</sup> This is interesting when you consider that some families may have only one adult in the home. The one family member may not attend church on a regular basis but does allow the church van to pick up the children on Sunday. This is a key fact in the project of this researcher. The church must address the needs of youth that are not being met by the parent or parents that build belief systems.

The author does realize that the findings cannot be generalized beyond the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in these two countries. "It may well be that youth reared in

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

other churches respond differently. It seems likely, however, that much of this study could apply to at least conservative Protestant churches since much about their body life is similar to Adventists.”

The Black Baptist Church is conservative mostly and this researcher agrees with the author. This article also included studies from the American and Southern Baptists. The results by Hoge and Petrillo (1978) found that church attendance and participation are most influenced by the attendance of the parents, peer pressure, type of youth leader, and quality of religious education.

### Tony Jones

Jones explores the post-modern world and how it impacts the ministry of youth workers in *Postmodern*. The author believes that this new generation of Christians will speak effectively to a world that emphasizes primary truths. Jones says youth are more attracted to an inclusive view of faith than an exclusive one. He says that “Christians must recover their prophetic voice and not condemn societal movements, but stand up to strains and themes that clearly contradict the truths we believe.”<sup>47</sup> The researcher agrees with this statement in that Jesus is the cure for youth as the culture affects their perception of reality.

One chapter examines a “Holistic Practice of Youth Ministry” in and outside the church. Youth ministry requires virtues and the author uses scripture to make his point. The researcher agrees that credibility is a major point in influencing the youth groups in

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<sup>47</sup>Tony Jones, *Postmodern* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2001), 38.

our churches. This book is one that makes good points about the post-modern world and informs the reader who desires to learn more about generation Y.

### Summary

The topic for this Doctor of Ministry group is “Leadership and Black Preaching.” The focus of the project being developed by the researcher is to influence the attitudes of teenage males in the rural church. Therefore, material that has been written on the development of youth ministry is the major focus of this review. The books reviewed on preaching revealed two that contained information that was used.

Illustrations are power tools that help to connect with this generation, given the emphasis on songs and video images. Killinger has a section in his book that focuses on developing illustrations that will be used in the narratives that are planned during the youth sessions. Dr. Moyd believes that practical theology should be included in any biblical truth. The sermon narratives that the youth will hear should be spoken in a manner that ties into their context. This truth by Dr. Moyd was embraced by the researcher due to the fact that youth today have issues that can be addressed through the Word of God. The sermon or narrative should not be abstract but contain relevant issues that will trigger growth.

Leadership is absolutely necessary to implement any project that moves in creative ways to encourage spiritual growth. Spencer Johnson’s *Who Moved My Cheese?* is a treasure with the main thought that change can be a way to avoid stagnation and inefficient ministry. Leaders are encouraged to step outside the box when necessary to supply the spiritual cheese needed for youth in their growth to adulthood. Maxwell helps the researcher to understand that a good leader will address the need of the youth workers (context associates) so that they will follow the vision of the leader. These principles will



work in any phase of ministry in the church of today. The books on leadership energized the researcher to design a project with sound leadership principles.

The books reviewed on youth ministry contain many ideas and affirmation of the need for this project. The focus on male youth is present but not the main focus of any book or article. The researcher was exposed to work that can be built upon to advance the desire he has to develop male youth spiritually. Dr. Perkins and many of the other authors say that youth ministry must reach out to youth who are immersed in a culture that embraces a new set of values. The researcher agrees with these men and women who are using the bible to build faith in a different context (post-modern) without compromising the integrity of God's word. They use this premise to create a ministry for youth that attracts them to see God in the workings of this world. Dean, in the article published in *Theology Today*, is the first to address specifically the Millennial generation. The article lines up with earlier statement concerning a need to understand the context of this generation before a plan can be formed to reach them with the gospel. She has research that provides insight into the value system of these youth.

The importance of projects such as the one by this researcher is highlighted in the work of the many authors in the book edited by Ratcliff and Davies. The research shows that adolescents develop a committed belief system during this period or faith dies, while for some a seed remains dormant waiting to germinate under the right conditions. This type of research highlights the necessity of new paradigms to impact this age group. Lee in his chapter on religious education affirms the need of youth ministers to use images and object lessons to spur spiritual development. Matthew Parker and Eugene Seals have written a book that closely resembles the vision of the researcher. Advice such as, talk to them, practice what you preach, and creating your own vision, are a few of the topics

covered that were used in this project. All of the books and articles stimulated thinking for the researcher as he developed a foundation to implement his youth ministry project.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

#### **Historical View of African American Male Participation in the Church**

Help us to realize that our brothers are not simply those of our own blood and nation, but far more are they those who think as we do and strive toward the same ideals. . . .

Help us, O Lord to remember our kindred beyond the sea—all those who bend in bonds, of our own blood and of human kind—the lowly and the wretched, the ignorant and the weak.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout slavery in the United States, slaveholders did little to promote the evangelization of African Americans. It was well documented that the first American slaveholders did not want their slaves to hear about the Bible. The slaveholders believed that the slaves would think that they were equal to the master before God. Albert Raboteau described it this way,

The most serious obstacle to the missionary's access to the slaves was the slaveholder's vague awareness that a Christian slave would have some claim to fellowship, a claim that threatened the security of the master slave hierarchy . . . A continual complaint of masters was that Christianity would ruin their slaves . . . since they would begin to think themselves equal to white folks.<sup>2</sup>

History has shown that slaveholders were right in their thinking. Many slaves did indeed assume that Christianity made them equal to the white masters. Some Christian

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Aptheker, ed., *Prayers for Dark People W.E.B. Du Bois* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1980) 22-26.

<sup>2</sup> Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 102.

slaves bought their freedom and became abolitionists who challenged the Western churches for their complicity in slavery.<sup>3</sup> An African Catholic layman led an attack against slavery that produced a policy statement from the Vatican. This policy consisted of a series of statements that made slavery unworkable.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the slave owner had reason to fear for the first century of slavery in North America. This movement continued until religion had a stronger hold in the southern colonies. Most slaves heard little about Christianity.

The War for Independence produced an opportunity for slaves to expand Christian activities and organize churches. The first permanent Baptist church for African Americans was established in Silver Bluff, South Carolina.<sup>5</sup> A slave named David George became the on-site pastor who preached in this church for three years.<sup>6</sup> Other great church leaders were George Liele, a Baptist preacher, Deacon Sharp, a loyalist, and Andrew Bryan, who was encouraged by his owner to preach so that he might pacify his other slaves. In 1788, Bryan was ordained and installed as pastor of the Ethiopian Church of Jesus Christ, which exists to this day as First African Baptist Church of Savannah.<sup>7</sup> This African American preacher possessed the leadership qualities that were necessary to lead a flock in the way of God and truth. Bryan was continually harassed and in 1790 he was imprisoned along with 50 members of his congregation. A white friend Abraham Marshall stated:

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<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa from Antiquity to the Present* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Africa World Press/ Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 71.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 136.

<sup>6</sup>This great leader later emigrated to Africa and helped found the nation of Sierra Leone while establishing the first Baptist church in West Africa.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 138.

The whites grew more and more inveterate; and taking numbers of them before magistrates—they were imprisoned and whipped . . . particularly Andrew who was cut and bled abundantly . . . He held up his hand, and told his persecutors that he rejoiced not only to be whipped, but would freely suffer death for the cause of Christ.<sup>8</sup>

Preaching, followed by true leadership, will always result in action through faith that can influence the people that God blesses the pastor to lead. Andrew Bryan fits that description and thus cements a legacy of obedience to the call from God. Bryan continued preaching and eventually won his freedom while serving as the pastor of a congregation that numbered seven hundred by the year 1800. The question must be asked, how did Bryan and others build such a strong faith? Did they have role models or mentors who influenced them?

The Second Great Awakening was a time of deep concern for southern slaveholders. The theology was that God intended that all people had the ability to come to Christ. This included slaves who recognized their sinful nature and the need for salvation through our Lord. The emphasis was on inward conversion and a de-emphasis on the outward status of believers. The revivalist preaching appealed to the masses, including slaves. Black male ministers were licensed to preach with spiritual freedom becoming a common topic. Large numbers of African Americans, slave and free, flocked to the Baptist Churches during these revivals.<sup>9</sup> This undermined the notion among whites that it was impossible to evangelize slaves. The large number of African American preachers accepting the call produced leaders with theology shifts that pointed sometimes to violent rebellion among the Christian slaves. One such revolt occurred in Richmond,

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 148.

Virginia and was named Gabriel's Rebellion with the slave preacher using the Bible to justify the attack.<sup>10</sup> It must be pointed out that these slave leaders believed that God could deliver them from the hands of the slave master. These saints failed and laws were passed that forbade African American slaves from assembling between sunset and sunrise. Even though these leaders failed, we must admire their resolve to move forward based on their interpretation of the Bible. The intense reaction by the slave owner did not deter slaves from worshipping in the model that was evolving. This led to the formation of what has been called the "invisible church," which met in secret where they were free to worship without the scrutiny of the slave master. Slaves, who believed that God would provide the solution to the problem of the day, led these invisible churches. The question must be asked, how did these preachers build such a strong faith? Did they have the seed of faith planted in their youth?

By the eve of the Civil War, Christianity was widely known throughout the slave communities on the plantations. The religion of the slaves was both visible and invisible in that the master hired an African American male to preach to the slaves. There were also the persons appointed by God to proclaim the living Word. A former slave Wash Wilson explained it:

When the niggers go round singin Steal Away to Jesus, dat mean dere gwine be a ligious metin dat night. De masters . . . didn't like dem ligious meetin's, so us natcherly slips off at night, down in de bottoms or somewhere. Sometimes us sing and pray all night.<sup>11</sup>

The slaves grew tired of hearing a message that centered on obeying the master and mistress. Even during a stressful time, God sent a leader to orchestrate a plan that

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 147.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 213.

would allow free worship. There was the threat of beatings and other terrible penalties, but they failed to deter the slaves. Preaching and leadership have always been prevalent in the tradition of African American churches. Prayer, preaching, singing, and support from the slave community energized these slaves during times of pain, sorrow, or mistreatment. The invisible church which existed in houses, fields, near streams, and any other isolated place where slaves felt safe, played a key role in the faith development of the slave population. It strengthened their resolve to endure slavery until freedom came as a result of the War Between the States. Wilson said that the slaves would sing and pray all night in the field. The question must be asked, did the teenage males attend these services?

The slaves looked to natural leaders who received their credentials from age, wisdom, strength, and the powers of the world of the spirits. One slaveholder said it was a notorious fact that on almost every large plantation of Negroes, there is one among them who holds a kind of magical sway over the minds and opinion of the rest; to him they look as their oracle . . . The influence of such a Negro, often a preacher, on a quarter is incalculable.<sup>12</sup>

This shows that leadership did exist which helped to shape the slave community to focus on God. These preachers most certainly were mentors who provided examples of living in this restricted context of oppression for young people and others. Observe the comments of Lerone Bennett concerning songs sung during this oppression.

- To give the community a true, valid, and useful song
- To keep the community invigorated
- To inspire the uninspired individual
- To enable the group to face its problems
- To comment on the slave situation

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<sup>12</sup>Lerone Bennett, *Before The Mayflower* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 98.

- To stir each member to personal solutions and to a sense of belonging in the midst of a confusing and terrifying world.<sup>13</sup>

The theme of oppression did move the slaves closer and continued throughout the history of black people, including the Civil Rights Movement. Songs were used to unite people and thus they had an impact on the male youth at this time. This theme could produce men of faith and wisdom that influenced the youth. The various black male teenagers of this era used that theme to develop a growing faith and belief system. Again the researcher says that the theme was a strong sense of community and oppression that resulted in faith to cope with the slave master.

Another difficult time for blacks was the time after the civil war particularly in the south. Swiftly after President R. B. Hayes compromised with the white southern political leaders, federal troops were removed from the south. The Ku Klux Klan started a reign of terror that trampled civil rights and cast African Americans under a system of servitude. These events affected the African American Baptist Church. Wade Hampton McKinney describes the mood of the period:

Finally, the last bitter thrust came for the Negroes. From 1890-1910 an adverse wave of legislation swept over the South disenfranchising the Negroes, thus taking away from them by direct legislation all their Constitutional rights. This had an immediate effect upon the ministry, especially in regards to numbers of the Baptist. The number of ministers in 1890 was only 5,468. By 1906 the total number of Baptist ministers was 17,117. . . .

This series of events made the Negro leaders feel that for some reason the hand of God was against them, that the head of the Church had come among them and removed the golden candlestick from its place. . . . Disappointed, they remembered whence they had fallen and consequently returned and began to do the first work. They did the natural thing. . . . The leaders now concentrated their

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 47.



power on the development of the religious and intellectual life of the masses.<sup>14</sup>

The African American Baptist Church continued to evolve and transform during the Reconstruction era. The church began to organize and develop leaders from within who led the way using sound literal biblical interpretation, realizing God was the head of the church. Early during the Reconstruction, national organizations were formed by men in the church and, even though they did not last, a precedent was set that encouraged future efforts.<sup>15</sup> Churches began to form local associations, which were located throughout the various communities. The significant thing to remember was that these churches had absolute independence.

Henry says that the African American Baptist Churches in North Carolina were strongly interested in education, especially for developing church leadership, and also emphasized the school level to produce teachers.<sup>16</sup> The Baptist crusade for souls led to a five-fold increase in the number of churches during the Reconstruction Era. One of the first Associations in North Carolina was the Eastern Missionary Baptist, which formed in 1865. These men and women often walked from one to two hundred miles on dirt, sand, and muddy roads to attend the annual session.<sup>17</sup> The preachers often had an opportunity to preach to some special congregation along the way. There were no trains, busses, and autos as there are today. Such was the determination of the early church leaders.

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<sup>14</sup>Floyd Massey, Jr. and Samuel Berry McKinney, *Church Administration in the Black Perspective* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1991), 15.

<sup>15</sup>C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 21.

<sup>16</sup>Philip N. Henry, *The Heritage of Blacks in North Carolina, Volume 1* (Charlotte, NC: The Delmar Company, 1990), 79.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 115.

These historical facts point to a black church that became focused on education. These facts were validated by other historians such as Mark Noll who wrote *A History of Christianity in The United States and Canada* and said that “despite the intensifying racism of the half-century after the Civil War, blacks seized control of their own religious lives.”<sup>18</sup> The Black churches began to establish State conventions in the south and began to look for broader venues of fellowship. The Black church also began to develop literary training through schools to empower the masses.<sup>19</sup> These church schools certainly had a context of black youth who encountered the oppressive racism of the day. This again led to a community concept of the school with the church leading in the drive to educate people. The teenagers in these schools would be exposed to a faith that is prevalent in the church. Thus again the theme of community and faith emerges to provide insight into the participation of males in the church.

The historical involvement of men in the church had a consistent theme throughout this section. That theme was a strong sense of community caused by the oppression they suffered. This oppression created a faith that God would receive them in heaven and care for them in their earthly life. The youth had to be affected by the interaction of life around them.

### **The Rural Church**

The term “rural” is an inclusive one embracing people living in towns, communities, and incorporated areas that had a population of three thousand residents or less. “The pattern of settlement shows up plainly from an airplane view of rural

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<sup>18</sup>Noll, *History Of Christianity*, 337.

<sup>19</sup>Wyatt Tee Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1992), 20.

America.”<sup>20</sup> There appeared colored plots of farmland with houses located along roads and highways. “The rural community began to change in the 1950’s with a population shift that affected the makeup of rural areas.” By 1947, the non-farm rural population exceeded the farm population.<sup>21</sup> This marked the first time that most rural residents made their living at something other than farming. Small farming communities evolved to include more factory workers than farmers and had more churches than the community could support at this time.

There were advantages and disadvantages that influenced African American youth male spiritual development in the rural church. Many of the advantages are described by Lincoln and Mamiya in their book, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. They point out that black families and churches were involved in an interactive relationship.

Families constituted the building blocks for black churches and the churches through their preaching, and teaching, symbols, belief system, morality, and rituals provided a unity—a glue that welded families and the community to each other . . . Parents often brought their children to church, sometimes even forcing them to go, because they deeply believed that the church would provide a dose of moral education and open up the spiritual dimensions of their lives.<sup>22</sup>

Although worship was shaped for adults, special Sunday services were set aside for the participation of children.<sup>23</sup> The pastor was often sought out for advice on important decisions and at points of family crisis. A stable family life was an important

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<sup>20</sup>Mark Rich, *Rural Prospect* (New York: Friendship Press, 1950), 10.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>22</sup>Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 311-312.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 312.

goal for the churches in their quest to build community.<sup>24</sup> The theme again emerges that a strong church spilled over into the community where it could influence those around them. This frame of reference had to effect the youth in these small communities.

To this day some black adults claim that their “dislike” for preachers stemmed from their childhood recollection. When the Sunday meal was served, the preacher they claimed, got the best part of the “gospel bird,” that is, chicken-leg, thigh, wing, and breast. All that was left for the children was the “first and last thing that went over the fence,” the neck and tail.<sup>25</sup>

This image of the pastor was sometime seen in a negative light as portrayed in the movie “Soul Food.” This movie presented the pastor as a person more concerned about eating than ministering to the crisis that the family was dealing with at the time.

Another interesting aspect of the rural church was that the exposure to negative outside influences was limited during the first half of the twentieth century. This can be verified in the book by Tonya Lanier called *Lost In The Shuffle*. She interviewed African American senior citizens from all over Davidson County. Fairbanks Evans was born in 1904 on a farm in the Linwood community of Davidson County. He explained that family and the church were the center of the community. Mr. Evans was 90 years old when this interview occurred and he stated:

We lived on small farm raised cotton, wheat and vegetables... The church was near the farm and was the center of community life. The Lord has been taking care of me. I thank him everyday for his many blessings, but I just can’t thank him enough . . . No need to fear death. It is going to come whether I am right or wrong. But as long as I live a Christian life my Lord will do the rest.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>26</sup>Tonya Lanier, *Lost In The Shuffle: Stories That Need To Be Told* (Lexington, NC: Speed Printing, 1994) 34.

The rural church served to produce men of God who grew spiritually in this country setting. The modern day setting presents many challenges to the rural church. The church no longer can be considered the center of community life. The jobs moved to the cities and towns but many churches remain in the rural community. These rural churches continue to function with worship and praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Historically, rural church membership had averaged 45 members, with women outnumbering men. This can be verified by considering the county in which this researcher resides and was called to pastor. There exist six to eight rural churches in the county. The membership in these churches average 40 to 65 members. The researcher knows this to be true because of the many worship services and revivals that he has attended over the years at these churches. They were mainly family churches with one or two main families that make up most of the membership. The majority of the leadership positions were held by members of these families. This gives them the power to influence church policy. The rural church was decidedly a community-involved institution that had family ties as a force that shaped the youth of this time with a strong example of faith by residents.

### **Effects of Postmodernism on Today's Youth**

The Nickelodeon cable channels evening lineup of classic reruns such as *I Love Lucy*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and *Bewitched* reflect a pre-postmodernism era. They reflect a time when our society was different and families much more functional and whole than they exist today. Choices were simpler and issues as black and white as the shows themselves. The pre-postmodernism time has gone and postmodernism litters the

landscape of our lives. A shift in thinking has taken place in the space of a generation. Generation X was the first to see the world through post-modern eyes.

“Postmodernism includes many dimensions of contemporary society.” At the forefront is an intellectual mood or outlook.<sup>27</sup> Scholars disagree as to what postmodernism involves, but agree on one point. Postmodernism marks the end of a single, universal world view.<sup>28</sup> Postmodernism is a totally different way of looking at the world from the modern framework. Unlike previous generations, Generation X does not see itself as living under the guiding hand of a giving God.<sup>29</sup> Roxburgh has an observation regarding Generation X. “My generation seeks only to survive in a godless, mindless universe where there are no rules, no right, no wrong, no meaning and no absolute truth.”<sup>30</sup> Stanley Grenz defined four assumptions regarding postmodernism that he says are buried deep in the minds of the X generation. “Xers think that life on earth must move from conquest to one of cooperation. Secondly, they have a sense of pessimism and powerlessness which is a cultural shift from the Baby Boom generation. Thirdly, the individual is an isolated component; the community is the whole. Fourthly, intellect has been moved from a position of authority with truth being relative at best and possibly nonexistent.” Grenz says that there are many truths, your truth, my truth, and her truth. “Common standards in the society are dissolving which reduces the ability of people to measure, judge, or dictate lifestyles.”

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11. <sup>27</sup>Stanley Grenz, *A Primer On Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1996)

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 12.

115. <sup>29</sup>Alan Roxburgh, “The Church In A Postmodern Context,” *Culture and Christianity* (1999),

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

Nancy T. Ammerman gave a lecture called “Just What Is Postmodernity and What Difference Does It Make to People of Faith?” She has some similar views with a few different insights. She begins by saying that in order for us to understand what “post” modernity might mean, we really have to remind ourselves of how the modern world contrasts with the traditional world that came before it.<sup>31</sup> The baby boomer generation must realize that earlier generations were uncomfortable with the world view of the modern age. She believes that the post-modern world presents opportunities for people of faith to build on modernity’s gains and transcend some of its limits. This researcher agrees that her statement represents a logical course. Roxburgh and Genz earlier in this section paint a fairly negative picture of Generation X. Ammerman does point out that the world is beginning to see the limits of rationality. This is evident when one sees the potential of nuclear weapons to destroy the world many times over, yet they are still being tested and produced. The different parts of the world see through lenses of their situation that have protested the spirit of the modern world. She also incorporates a sense of faith in the lecture that reveals a bright spot that Gentz and Roxburgh fail to address in their work. “Rather than being preoccupied with making ourselves, our faith and our scripture acceptable to a modern rationalist world—that is now under challenge—this is a time to speak forthrightly of the ways of the spirit, of the knowledge that comes by faith.”<sup>32</sup>

Between 1960 and 1990 postmodernism emerged as a cultural phenomenon which focused on the production of information.<sup>33</sup> The information age does not alter the work

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<sup>31</sup>Nancy T. Ammerman, “Just What Is Postmodernity and What Difference Does It Make to People of Faith” (Youth Church and Culture Lecture, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1999), 11.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>33</sup>Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 17.

we do but brings the world together in a way never before possible. Information is spread around the globe with the click of a computer mouse. This truly gives us a sense that we inhabit a global community. Instead of repetitive manufacture of goods, there has now emerged a fast-paced society with many options. These are some of the characteristics of the postmodern age.

This way of thinking does have an impact on the youth in our churches. To effectively minister in the postmodern age we must admit that a new time exists and adapt ministry (paradigm) to this way of thinking. An example of this new way of thinking is described in the book by Jimmy Long. A student explains his struggles with homosexuality. He understands the difference between right and wrong, but believes he would do the right thing. He felt that he could do the right thing by himself. Long suggests that this student is already living in the postmodern era and community influence is strong in his life. The student is being pulled by both the Christian community and the gay campus community. This student eventually becomes more involved in the gay community. He tries to deal with the problem alone instead of relying on the Christian community for help. "Right or wrong is not the issue, but the pull of two conflicting communities that is the central battle ground for this student."<sup>34</sup>

One of the first lessons for us to learn is that only 28% of people responding to a survey believe absolute truth. Long states that we need to live the truth instead of talking about the truth. The lives of Christians will become more important to seekers as evidence to use in deciding to follow Christ. Modeling becomes crucial for Christian development. Generation X is the first group to be included in this post-modern context. The shift in

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<sup>34</sup>Jimmy Long, *Generating Hope* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 78.



thinking begins with this generation. This chapter would be incomplete without examining the next group to emerge after Generation X. This new group should force the church to rethink youth ministry. This new group has been called the Y generation or the Millennial generation.

- This generation's pulse runs fast. Bombarded by frequent images, they are in need of continual "hits."
- The remote control symbolizes their reality: change is constant; focus is fragmented.
- They've eaten from the tree of knowledge.
- They live for now.
- They are jaded, having a "been there/done that" attitude, nothing shocking them.
- They take consumerism for granted.
- They are a cyber-suckled community.
- They process information in narrative images (like Nike commercials).
- They've had everything handed to them.
- They don't trust adults.<sup>35</sup>

The lack of trust in adults comes from the breakdown in society. The divorce rate is high in society and celebrities speak on television of their willingness to live together rather than marrying for love. These teenagers receive conflicting signals from adults on a daily basis. The Millennials, in one sense, have good reason not to "trust" adults.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Wendy Murray Zoba, "The Class of 00," *Christianity Today*, 23 February, 1997, 18.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 2.

William Strauss, coauthor of *Generations*, says: “this age group has stepped into a world where doing corrupt and unhealthy things is just a part of everyday life.” In *Generations*, Strauss and Howe write:

Boomers are setting about to protect children from the social and chemical residue of the euphoric awakening they themselves had launched a quarter century earlier. . . . Grown-up Boomer radicals who once delighted in shocking their own mom and dads now surprise themselves with their own strictly perfectionist approach to child nurture.<sup>37</sup>

The parental concern of the repentant boomers will cause the Millennials, Strauss asserts, with a team spirit and collective sense of purpose and civic resolve. “This restrengthening of parental protection is forging a sense of community and allowing the opportunity for peer pressure to become positive.” This writer agrees with Strauss that leadership from parents and the church will have an effect that allows this generation to grow in a positive way by encouraging acceptable behavior in this society. Strauss’s optimistic speculations are supported somewhat by a survey of adolescents conducted by the Horatio Alger Association. “The mission of the Horatio Alger Association is to recognize contemporary role models whose experiences exemplify the opportunities for a successful life are available to all individuals who are dedicated to the principles of integrity, hard work, perseverance, and compassion for others.”<sup>38</sup> The 2002-2003 poll findings expose several interesting patterns among different groups of youth, but offer no

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>38</sup>The *State of Our Nation’s Youth Report* is another means through which the Horatio Alger Foundation endeavors to assist young people. By giving voice to teenagers’ thoughts, concerns, opinions, and aspirations, we gain a better understanding of how our culture affects young people and how we might best serve them. The Association worked with the firm of Peter D. Hart research associates, Inc., in conducting the back to school survey. With their assistance, the 2002-2003 *State of Our Nation’s Youth* report incorporates responses from youth balanced to reflect gender, geographic, ethnic, and socio-economic makeup of the United States. It can be found at [www. Horatioalger.com](http://www.Horatioalger.com). pages 39-54.

universal predictors of behavior or priorities. “The only true commonality among all students in this survey is a view of their futures that mixes excitement with nervous anticipation.” Some of the survey results can be found in the appendices. One key survey result that is relevant to this project shows that 43% of the Millennials say religion is very important in their definition of success. 33% said that religion is somewhat important to their definition of success. That means that 76% of Millennials are receptive to the gospel message. This generation is ready to move forward in building a life that includes a practicing faith.

### **Biblical Foundation**

This biblical piece will examine the Old and New Testament scriptures to reflect the will of God, described in reference to youth development and the result it should have in the transition to manhood. The first passage which describes the attitude that should exist among adults when addressing spiritual development in youth comes from the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 6:2-9.

We have borrowed the name of this book, as in former cases, from the Vulgate Latin, *Deuteronomium*, as the Vulgate has done from the Greek version of the Septuagint, Δευτερονομιον, which is a compound term literally signifying the second law.<sup>39</sup> In Hebrew, like the preceding books, it takes its name from its commencement, *Elleh Haddebarim*, “these are the words,” and in the best rabbinical Bibles its running title is

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<sup>39</sup>Bernhard Anderson, *The Books Of The Bible* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 89; Edd Rowell, *Mercer Commentary On The Bible* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995), 201; H Rowley and Matthew Black, *Peak's Commentary on the Bible* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962), 269; Moshe Weinfeld, *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1.

*Sepher Debarim*, “the book of debarim,” or “the book of the words.”<sup>40</sup> Deuteronomy has been described as “a kind of manual for the future kings of Israel (17:23) written by scribes, as were instructions for the Egyptians and Mesopotamian kings.”<sup>41</sup>

The date when Deuteronomy was put in its final form based on internal evidence seems to favor a time after the Mosaic era. The author makes third person references to Moses instead of first person statements about himself as one would expect Moses to do.<sup>42</sup> “Beyond the Jordan,” a common phrase used for the territory east of that river, gives the perspective of a writer within the land of Canaan. The “book of the law” found during the repair of the Temple in the eighteenth year of Josiah’s reign (621 B.C.) has been identified by some scholars as Deuteronomy. The nature of the reforms of Josiah and the contents of Deuteronomy show an interesting similarity.<sup>43</sup> For example, the call for centralization of worship (Deuteronomy. 12) is matched by Josiah’s destruction of all altars except the one in the Temple in Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:4-20). Kitchen has pointed out that Deuteronomy as a book, bears much of the form of an ancient Near Eastern Hittite Suzereinty treaty of the late second millennium.<sup>44</sup> Many scholars identify the book as Deuteronomy, however what is meant by Deuteronomy varies greatly from one scholar to another. There are those such as Peter Craigie who consider it to be the whole Mosaic

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<sup>40</sup>Paul Achtemeier, *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996), 239; Finis Jennings Dake, *Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible* (Lawrenceville, KS: Dake Bible Sales Incorporated, 1991), 1999.

<sup>41</sup>Weinfeild, *The Anchor Bible*, 4.

<sup>42</sup>S. R. Driver, *International Critical Commentary, Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1978), 50-55.

<sup>43</sup>James Mays, *Harpers Bible Commentary* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers, 1988), 209.

<sup>44</sup>K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1966), 99.

Deuteronomy in its present form. "There are many interchanges that cannot be explained by the literary critical criterion."<sup>45</sup> The plural section of chapter 12:11-12 repeats verses 4-7.<sup>46</sup> Steuernagel considers these to be two different sources and therefore maintains that there are three strands in the chapter. Von Rad says: "We need only consider what is said about the possibility of whole towns falling into apostasy (13:13)."<sup>47</sup> This researcher tends to agree that Deuteronomy is a later work based on the above-mentioned points that question authorship. The scribe who recorded the final form of Deuteronomy is not known. Long-standing tradition among Christians and Jews favors Moses as the author. The main emphasis of the book is on grace, power, and jealousy.<sup>48</sup>

"The book of Deuteronomy contains an account of what passed in the wilderness from the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt to the seventh day of the twelfth month of the same; making in the whole a history of the transactions of exactly five weeks, the months of the Jews being lunar."<sup>49</sup> The history is continued about seven days after the death of Moses; for he begins to deliver his first sermon to the people in the plains of Moab the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year, Deuteronomy 1:3, and died on the first day of the twelfth

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<sup>45</sup>Peter Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 46, 69.

<sup>46</sup>Weinfeild, *The Anchor Bible*, 15.

<sup>47</sup>Gerhard Von Rad, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1966), 28.

<sup>48</sup>George Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Bible "Deuteronomy"* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953),

<sup>49</sup>Driver, *The International Critical Commentary "Deuteronomy,"* 1.

month of the same year, aged 120 years.”<sup>50</sup> The purpose of the book is best seen as the attempt to relate the Mosaic faith of Israel to the new life in Canaan.<sup>51</sup>

The people who inhabited the land of Canaan are called Canaanites. These people are regarded religiously as threatening and unacceptable to Israel. “The defining god of Canaanite religion from Israel’s perspective is Baal.”<sup>52</sup> The sociopolitical economics organization of the land on Canaan is a feudal system of city states. “The city states are presided over by privileged elite who lived off the surplus of the agricultural peasants who were menial and exploited members of the economy.”<sup>53</sup>

“As the Israelites were now about to enter into the promised land, many of them have not witnessed the different transactions in the wilderness, the former generations having been all destroyed except Joshua and Caleb; the writer moves to impress their hearts with a deep sense of their obligation to God, and to prepare them for the inheritance which God had prepared for them.”<sup>54</sup> The writer repeats the principal occurrences of the forty years, and shows them the absolute necessity of fearing, loving, and obeying God. He repeats the Ten Commandments, explains each, and the ordinances belonging to them, adding others which he had not delivered before; confirms the whole law and urges them to keep it. “He announces the most awful judgments against those who should break it; renews the covenant between God and the people; prophesies of

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<sup>50</sup>Rowley and Black, *Peaks Commentary On The Bible*, 270-273.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Walter Brueggemann, *Reverberations of Faith* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002),

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Deuteronomy 1-34, all quoted scripture comes from the New American Standard Bible version. Adam Clarke, *Clarke’s Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1972), 734.

things which should come to pass in the latter days; blesses each of the tribes, prophetically, with the choicest spiritual blessings; and then, having viewed the whole extent of the land, from the top of Mount Nebo or Pisgah, says that Moses yielded up the ghost, and was privately buried by God, leaving Joshua the son of Nun for his successor.”<sup>55</sup>

The preaching of Moses (name used by unknown author) aims to equip the people for life in a prosperous, pluralistic context. This sermon would enable them to understand the importance of the Commandments when they have settled down.<sup>56</sup> A crisis did develop in Israel after they moved to the land of Canaan. The crisis is partly religious because loyalty to the God of Israel has been undermined by the worship of Canaanite gods (13:12-18).<sup>57</sup> The local sanctuaries were scattered throughout the countryside with the God of Israel and the Canaanite gods worshipping side by side (12:2-3). Some prophets made the problem worse by authorizing the worship of other gods (13:1-5).<sup>58</sup> This series of events reminds God’s people in society of the importance to focus on the true Holy One of Israel. There are many gods in this postmodern world that compete with worship of the God of Heaven. The male youth is confronted with the television prophet who proclaims that peace in life exists through a lifestyle of fame, riches, and with many women at their leisure. Happiness is portrayed as found through the pursuit and attainment

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Gary Millar, *Now Choose Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 11.

<sup>57</sup> Mays, *Harpers Bible Commentary*, 209; Ernest Wright, *The Interpreter’s Bible “Deuteronomy”* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), 312-313; Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 132-133; J.A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974), 176-177.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

of worldwide fame. These are the gods that become the focal point of life in these times. These gods, whether they are people or things, move the mentality in a direction away from God. The male youth must be shown that, through the knowledge of God, love and happiness exists on many different levels.

Another problem is social with the breakdown in family values due to social change (21:18-21). The shift from an agricultural economy to the use of money allows people to accumulate and lend money which creates a problem. Farmers are losing their land to classes who lend money, with the farmer unable to satisfy the debt. This scenario caused the farmer and family to be enslaved (15:12-18).<sup>59</sup> This enslavement resulted in people taking advantage of the family. Money is a key issue to the male youth in our society. How do they get the money necessary to purchase the things they need for the happiness that they desire? Morality is sometimes compromised, with self becoming the only consideration. This means that a commitment to God should be linked with a belief that success requires, and must involve, a vision that God provides. The people of Israel know what the prophet Moses (unknown author) has spoken regarding the family and still have problems.

“A third aspect of the crisis is political. The judicial system is corrupted by bribery and has become unfair to those most in need of justice (16:18-20).” To counter the above mentioned challenges Deuteronomy offered itself to Israel as a reform law.<sup>60</sup> It envisions a new society based on a dedication to God and God’s law. The writer gives what amounts to a sermon in the passage to be examined Deuteronomy 6:2-9.

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 189.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 210.



“Now these are the commandments” says verse one as the people of Israel are about to cross into the land and occupy it. “They should live in the continual practice of the law; for by this they were to be distinguished from all the nations of the world, and all these were to be in force till the Son of God should come. Respect his sovereign authority as a lawgiver, and ever feel one bound to obey him.”<sup>61</sup> “No man can walk either conscientiously or safely who has not the fear of God continually before his eyes.” Respect his sovereign authority as a lawgiver, and ever feel bound to obey him. When this fear is gone, more than a guardian angel had fled from our lives. The question is whether or not our male teenagers fear God. This commandment repeats the need for a bible study that plants a seed of faith in these male teens.

The writer says that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.<sup>62</sup> “Whoever fears God will endeavor to bring up his or her children in the way of righteousness, that they also may fear God, and that the pure and undefiled religion may be preserved in his family through all its generations, not only in word, but also in practice.”

This leads to the question as to why men and boys fail to live up to the responsibility God has given them? Therefore, male youth must understand that the fear of God is the beginning of joy, peace, and fulfillment in life. As the problems mentioned above enter into our life, saints are able to understand that the teachings of Jesus will allow the family to discern the will of God.

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<sup>61</sup>See the difference between commandments, statutes, judgments, etc., pointed out, Leviticus 26:15

<sup>62</sup>Deuteronomy 6:2

The author further describes the most important commandment that must be taught to the sons (male youths) in our households, families, neighborhoods, communities, and in the church. This chapter provides the pivot around which everything else in Deuteronomy resolves. It has been called the Shema or Great Commandment.<sup>63</sup> The words of Moses (unknown author) speak to the people of Israel but are relevant in any age including the present.

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.<sup>64</sup>

One of the important aspects of the biblical tradition is the command from God to love. The doctrine of love shapes much of the Jewish and Christian spiritual foundation. This demand in Deuteronomy for a loving attitude toward God is related to the concept of moral obedience.<sup>65</sup> It reflects an attitude of giving priority to the demands of God. Israel must consider all the gifts and benefits that God has showered upon them to this point. It allows Israel to see the loveliness of God. The goodness of God applies to any age or time when we realize the blessings that have been received. Gods love should extend to the hearts of men and women if they are to be productive in this postmodern ministry setting. The sons (male youth) must see a reflective glow of God in the lives of saints so that they embrace the life God will make possible through obedience. Love should be practiced in

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<sup>63</sup>Patrick Miller, *Interpretation Deuteronomy* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 97-102.

<sup>64</sup>Deuteronomy 6:4-9

<sup>65</sup>Leander Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 352.

the church and communities, by the establishment of new paradigms that create the necessary environment to learn these truths. This theme of love requires more discussion and attention.

God is the supreme expression of love, motivating, inspiring, and making possible a deeper understanding of love in human beings. This example allows men and women in the church to see beyond the faults of the male youth, while visualizing what God will allow them to become. Many male youth have experienced the worship of God through appearance at the church house with their mother or father. The change in attitude of the male youth should be desired by the membership with the love component as the foundation. Moses (unknown author) said teach the principle of love to your sons in the home, on the street, in the church house, and at every opportunity. Male youth who are being raised in a broken home should be taught these truths by mentors who are Christians. Men and women who fear the Lord with genuine love in their hearts will make a difference.

What is this teaching that the author is referring to in this sermon? When the youth asks, “what is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the Lord your God has commanded you?” The parent retells the story of the exodus from Egypt.<sup>66</sup> The youth is then taught the ethical, moral, and spiritual behavior of the community called Israel. Ancient Israel’s identity is rooted in the story of liberation from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. The identity of the male youth today is rooted in the history of the past. The past should be taught to our male youth, with an emphasis on the deliverance God has

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<sup>66</sup>Thomas Mann, *Deuteronomy* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1995), 51.

bestowed upon Black people today. Internalizing the commandments of God is the beginning of wisdom for these post-modern male youth.

This text also asserts that the “Lord God of Israel is absolutely God, and none other exist. God alone is Jehovah (Yahweh) the absolute, the One who had, by His choice of Israel made Himself known.” Since there is but One God, and that God is Israel’s God, so Israel must love God unreservedly and entirely. The “heart” is mentioned as the seat of understanding; the “soul” as the center of will and personality; the “might” as representing the outgoings and energies of all the vital powers.<sup>67</sup> God’s testimonies must be taught to our male youth, and the utmost diligence must be used to make them understand them. This is a most difficult task; and it requires much patience, judgment, and loyalty from Christians to enable them to do this good, important work in the best and most effectual manner. Do we take the time to teach the Word of God in settings other than the preaching moment to help establish this biblical foundation?

Much can be learned from the way a Jewish child is educated in his exposure to the words of God. The formal education begins at the age of five with the child learning the principle prayers he has to recite throughout his life.<sup>68</sup> Haim Dimitrovsky says that a boy could spend five years on biblical studies until age 10. Some of a select few continue their studies well into manhood. There are times in the past when youth have recited a scripture from memory at various church functions. In this postmodern setting that our youth live in, many read the speech from paper on special occasions. The objective of the church should be to provide a setting that makes the words of the writer a reality. His instruction

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<sup>67</sup>Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes On The Old Testament* (Cedar Rapids, IA: Parsons Technology, 1999), Electronic Edition.

<sup>68</sup>Haim Dimitrovsky, *Exploring The Talmud* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1976), 9.

to teach the male child provides words of wisdom, so success can be found in this present context. God then blesses the youth, who becomes a man that shares the knowledge of God with other youth, in a manner that provides faith and healing to a suffering soul.

### Mark

The New Testament passage comes from Mk 2:2-12 that describes the healing of the paralytic man. This is a familiar scripture that has been preached many times concerning faith. The researcher proposes that another lesson exists that can benefit our desire to reach male youth with the knowledge of Christ. The word "Gospel" means "Good News." The theological message of Mark is that the gospel is good news.<sup>69</sup> The scripture begins by saying "Jesus came...preaching the gospel of God" (1:14).

Mark gave his pamphlet a confessional structure. The Gospel falls roughly into halves, the first half of the Gospel (1:1 to 8:30) reaches a climax in 8:29 when Peter, a Jew and a representative of the people of the new age, confesses openly that Jesus is the Messiah. Each of the incidents recorded in the first half of Mark's pamphlet prepared his audience for this moment of recognition and confession.<sup>70</sup>

The second half of Mark's Gospel is controlled by the theme of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, where the prophecy of His suffering, death, and resurrection is fulfilled. A full third of the gospel is centered in Jerusalem, where the conflict between the representatives of the new age is intensified. The climax in the account is reached in the confession of the Roman centurion responsible for the crucifixion, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (15:39). The Roman represented the Gentile world that had been hostile to God. By

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<sup>69</sup>Lamar Williamson, *Mark Interpretation* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1983), 8.

<sup>70</sup>Douglas Hare, *Mark* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 7.

making the confession of Peter and the Roman centurion points of climax, Mark emphasizes that Jew and Gentile can be led to join their voices in acknowledging the dignity of Jesus as God's Agent and unique Son.<sup>71</sup> Evidence from the gospel verifies that it is written for a Roman audience. Mark explains Jewish customs in chapter 7:2-4; 15:42. It contains the ministry of Jesus and emphasizes the places he visits, his death, and resurrection.

The structure of confession that Mark gives to his gospel serves to call Christians to identify themselves with the confessing church as a bold expression of their Christian commitment. The entire gospel stands as a witness to God's ability to sustain those who are committed to the accomplishment of God's will in spite of opposition. It celebrates the belief that vindication follows suffering.<sup>72</sup> The account of the paralytic brought fourth healing and is contained in Mk 2:1-12. Jesus, prior to this passage, has been preaching the gospel in Galilee.

Jesus has come home and taken refuge in "the house" of Peter. This is assumed since we hear of no other. The capacity of the average Capernaum home allows for 50 people based on the length of excavated homes.<sup>73</sup> Jesus sees faith that manifests itself plainly in this passage. It is more than the ordinary faith which sought the help of Jesus; it is a faith that is strong, persistent, and inventive enough to discover the most unusual way of placing the sick man before Jesus. We do not know the details of this man's spiritual

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>72</sup>J. D. Douglas, *New Commentary On The Whole Bible* (Cedar Rapids, IA: Parson Technology, 1999), Electronic Edition.

<sup>73</sup>Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 139.

situation, but Jesus is ready to forgive him of his sins. “In the time of Jesus it is common to regard physical ills as a punishment or consequence of sin.” But whatever the details, Jesus sees that the man needs more than physical mending; he needed spiritual restoration. “Son, your sins are forgiven,” (Mk 2:5; Matt. 9:2) indicates that Jesus perceives sin to be the man’s real problem.

This passage of scripture is a miracle, when you consider that the man regains strength to his body. The man is able to take up his pallet and go home. The miracle that Jesus performs, while teaching and preaching, shows the equality He has with God in having the power to forgive sins. Miracles prove forgiveness is available for people of faith. This passage illustrates the presence of the new age and the reality of its blessings from the God of heaven.

To get a proper perspective of the audience to which Mark wrote this gospel, the social context must be examined. The majority of the Roman Christians were lower-class immigrants, including Jews and Gentiles. They were organized in several diverse house church communities.<sup>74</sup> Christianity emerged among the Jewish population in Rome by 48 CE.<sup>75</sup> The sequence of events told in this healing story is made possible by four friends who bring the man to Jesus. Their actions are acknowledged by Jesus not only as an unspoken request for help but as an expression of their faith.<sup>76</sup>

Today’s believer can find relevance in this passage and miracle story. There are some problems that can be seen in the text. It is a fact that the man could not bring himself

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<sup>74</sup>Leander Keck, *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume 8* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press), 514.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Robert Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 34* (Dallas, TX: Word Books Publishers, 1989), 94.

to where Jesus is preaching because of his condition. He relies on four friends (mentors) to insure that he gets to where Christ is preaching. These four men have qualities that must be examined. They must have a spirit of determination to work for spiritual restoration. Secondly, these men must have already established a spiritual relationship with Jesus. Thirdly, these men not only talk about spirituality but live a spiritual life. Fourthly, these men must have possessed a heart of compassion due to their actions; fifthly, they believed that Jesus is the answer to curing the paralysis.

The first problem they encounter is that the obvious way of carrying him to the church house is blocked. These men could have left with excuses as to why they could not reach Jesus. They decide to use a different paradigm to get the man to Jesus. The men realize that the roof area is unoccupied and they move him to the roof. Jesus is inside and creating an opening will allow for this man to see Jesus. Some or all agree that lowering him down will move Jesus to act on his behalf. This creative way of moving beyond the accepted social behavior produces results.

This story describes a paralytic, but there are many parallel social conditions that male youths suffer in this postmodern world. Depression, leading to suicide, is on the increase in the African American community. Drug use, low self esteem, disregard for authority, premature fatherhood, high school dropout, and the feeling of helplessness are real issues today. These social issues lead to a form of paralysis that keeps the youth from reaching Jesus. Mentors or role models are needed to design new paradigms that allow the seeds of faith to germinate and heal this condition. This text inspires the believer to understand that efforts make a difference in our desire to minister to male youth. The man on the pallet has some physical problems that need addressing, but more importantly, he has spiritual problems relating to his disconnection from God. There are male youth who



need to meet Jesus so that a change in attitude can take place, thereby establishing faith and peace in God. This story shows that, once faith is established and belief is sincere in the heart, healing occurs. This is not an easy road as demonstrated in this story. The church has a responsibility to love the youth who are suffering spiritual paralysis by getting them to Jesus so an attitude change can occur. We need only imagine the joy and satisfaction that must have been felt by the four men when their faith allowed a man to internalize the truth. This is obviously what should be happening today in this post-modern context. Moreover, we should not let obstacles stand in our way. Faith and healing arise where desire is present, where a community of faithful people offers its testimony, and where the Holy Spirit is at work.

In the public domain of the post-modern world, evil is rarely evaluated with the proper seriousness. Yet we live in a world in which a dramatic confrontation between good and evil continues daily on a large scale. Drug dealing and violence lead to crisis in many cities, towns, and communities. Gangs attempt to fill a void left by absent family, community options, with the church praying without any action. Selling crack is seen as a way to get a pair of sneakers or a fancy car. Kids are finding it difficult to find a place to play safely with their friends. Barbed wire can be found topping the fences at our schools and metal detectors are standard at all sporting events. Demons operating in social structures threaten our personal and family lives. There is a need for Christian men (mentors) willing to get these youth to Jesus where they can find some direction. The paralytic man is healed due to the Christ-like love of these men. They knew that exposure to Jesus would make a difference. The youth in our church are suffering and a new paradigm that removes social structures needs to occur. Creativity and a Christ-like determination on our part will result in positive change.

## Theological Foundation

The word “theology” means literally speaking or thinking about God. Plato used this word to refer to speech or stories about the gods.<sup>77</sup> Modern Christians say that theology is an explanation of the story we tell about God or, more formally, as the interpretation of faith.<sup>78</sup> Theology involves thinking about one’s faith and asking questions about itself. Theological thinking is a personal spiritual resource and it facilitates growth. The more people understand the meaning of such spiritual realities as the activities of God, intercessory prayer, and the community of faith, the more they can experience these realities. This will be the approach as the theological foundation of this researcher concerning this project becomes clear to the reader.

The question that surfaces in the world today is how do you contemporize theology? There are two different approaches taken by those who see the beliefs involved in Christianity as important. William Horden lists these as those of the translators and the transformers. “The transformer is convinced that the world has undergone a serious change since biblical times.”<sup>79</sup> The beliefs of Christianity are so tied to the ancient world-view that they cannot be maintained independently of it. The transformer says that men and women have changed with the passage of time and that their nature has been so altered that the message will fall on rejecting ears.<sup>80</sup> To the translators, the transformers seem not to have re-expressed the message, but to have substituted another message for it.

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<sup>77</sup>Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (New York: Oxford Press, 1947), 194.

<sup>78</sup>Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically* (Berrien Springs: Andrew University Press, 1999), 4.

<sup>79</sup>Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), 113.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

This entails Christianity without God or a qualitatively unique place for Jesus Christ.<sup>81</sup> The translators attempt to say what the Bible would say if it were being written to us in our present situation. This is the position of most conservative Christians and reflects the teaching in most rural churches. The experience of the researcher agrees that black churches tend to be conservative. This type of theology in the post-modern world does affect our male youth (Generation Y) because of how they view the world.

The job of the pastor today is to open eyes spiritually so that, as God's light shines upon them, the youth begin to see their true self and the world. This spiritual seeing changes the "I" into the pervasiveness of Christ with peace and happiness becoming the end result. As the spiritual vision breaks, the youth say that "it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me."<sup>82</sup> Spiritual seeing occurs from the emphasis of some simple principles. They are truth, verbal honesty, intellectual modesty, rationality, and frame of reference.

### **Truth**

There must be a commitment to the truth, because the community of faith cannot afford to make its own prosperity more important than truth. The blessings through hard work have allowed parents to provide many things for their male youths. Many of these young men measure self esteem based on clothing and Nike Air Jordans. Faith in material things and status in the community could be considered the norm today. It is necessary for saints to stress that blessings come from God. The possibility exists that material things could be lost due to a number of reasons, but the love from God is eternal when the words

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 116.

<sup>82</sup>Galatians 2:20.

of Jesus are examined. The love of material possessions can cause male youths to betray God's truth. Jesus informs the rich young ruler that he needs to sell all his possessions and follow him.<sup>83</sup> The point being that Jesus wants the rich young ruler to understand that the Heavenly reward is more important than material things. The growth of the United States economy is based on the selling of goods and services. Emphasis is placed on the accumulation of many different material possessions. Jesus wants the youth to gain the truth by internalizing God's word and all other things will be worked out.

The human and natural sciences proclaim that humans are getting better as new discoveries of medicine and science come forth. Medicines are found to heal and improve the quality of life. Men and women are launched into space where they stay for months at a time. The Hubble Telescope looks into the universe searching for human answers to the questions of life. The scientific community is constantly searching for new truth. The ongoing discovery of religious truth is less obvious but just as important. Many Christians consider talks of a new presentation of the truth in this present age as heresy. Jesus said in a parable "The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field."<sup>84</sup> The seed of the mustard tree is small but grows to become very large. The male youth convert must be nurtured so a faith that begins small can grow into a faith that is seen more distinctly, judges life more intelligently, and loves more strongly. This parable is a representation of the progress of the gospel in the world and the growth of grace that leads the soul to the fullness of glory to enjoy God in heaven.

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<sup>83</sup>Luke 18:18-22

<sup>84</sup>Matt 13:31

## Verbal Honesty

The principle of verbal honesty involves the communication of truth rather than the discovery of the truth. The researcher's theological view should be clear even if people disagree with his convictions. There is a moral obligation not to take a position for strategic reasons. Robertson McQuilkin writes: "Integrity may be the most precious possession I have, its violation my greatest loss. Can I be Trusted? If not, all other virtues become uncertain."<sup>85</sup> The goal should always be to "speak the truth in love" and enrich the community of faith.<sup>86</sup> The male youths need to hear honest words that translate into their life experiences. These truths should be structured for growth to take place in their everyday living. This is accomplished by teaching the truth in God's word with love and understanding while providing a strong example for them to see. The African American male youth is dealing with many things that can influence the decision making process. Peer pressure to try drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gangs, and wild stunts, are a few daily options for them. Their hormones begin to race at puberty, and they need an understanding of why these changes occur and how to deal with becoming a young man from a theological perspective. Verbal honesty from a perspective of this present day gives credibility to the researcher or other saints involved in youth ministry.

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<sup>85</sup>Robertson McQuilkin, *An Introduction To Biblical Ethics* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1995) 381.

<sup>86</sup>Eph 4:15

### **Intellectual Modesty**

When theological models have been revealed to the researcher via the Holy Spirit, it should lead to intellectual modesty. Speaking without a concerted effort to ensure that our male youth understand our theology can be seen as seeking self-praise and create some disconnects. The message should be preached (sermon narratives) in a way that youth leave the church with a new understanding of scripture and a desire to change. Jesus taught that it is necessary to be humble before God. He compared humility to childlikeness: "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all."<sup>87</sup> Youth grow in this life with expectations, excitement, and soon realize that they are not sufficient in themselves and need to depend on others for many of their necessities.

Intellectual modesty should also be encouraged by three facts: First, there is an immeasurable gulf between human ideas and ultimate truth. Second, we all need to learn as much as we can; keeping an open mind to the ideas of those who express different views and ask different questions. Third, the views of our theological opponents may be actually right and should be considered. These facts can help men and women serving in youth ministry to grow and keep an open mind to new ideas, thus benefiting the community of faith.

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<sup>87</sup>Luke 18:16-17

## Rationality

The principle of rationality is based on the assumption that truth makes more sense than error. Some people are uncomfortable with the notion that reason must be used in judging theological truth because of our cultural conditioning. God gives us a mind to think and the researcher believes it is more dangerous not to think. The researcher believes that theological thinking is not a matter of judging truth, but recognizing it in the midst of conflicting claims. Openness to new understanding of truth and a creative vision are necessary to do theology. John Locke is right when he states:

When men have found some general propositions that could not be doubted of as soon as understood, it was, I know, a short and easy way to conclude them innate. This being once received, it eased the lazy from the pains of search, and stopped the inquiry of the doubtful, concerning all that was once styled innate; and it was of no small advantage to those who affected to be masters and teachers, to make this the principle of principles, that principles must not be questioned; for, having once established this tenet, that there are innate principles, it put their followers upon a necessity of receiving some doctrines as such; which was to take them off from the use of their own reason and judgment, and put them upon believing and taking them upon trust without further examination.<sup>88</sup>

This is important when you give consideration to the society our male youth are living in and dealing with on a daily basis. Some churches prohibit them from participating in a long list of activities and other churches make no reference to conduct outside the community of faith. A male youth who wears his hat backwards is not doomed to hell for this action. Dress should not be so restrictive that youth reject religion due to the church requirements. The Holy Spirit should lead the decision-making process to ensure a proper

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<sup>88</sup>John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995), 108.

Christian walk. Rationality through prayer to God is a crucial step in affecting male attitudes and growth in the church. Jesus presents a stirring example of rational thinking in the statement below to the Pharisees.

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath." But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? "Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent? "But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. "But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the innocent.<sup>89</sup>

How simply and beautifully Jesus cuts through legalism to remind us that our do's and don'ts must be measured against simple, basic principles. God desires mercy, not simply sacrifice (i.e., ritual observance). Thus, it is always "lawful" to do what is good and, like Jesus Himself, to have compassion. This approach can be used in all areas of kingdom building of male youths. Situations must be evaluated instead of being condemned from our presuppositions of scripture. This type of thinking is absolutely necessary in this post-modern world today.

### **Frame of Reference**

There needs to be a dynamic that is necessary for the interpretation of faith to be effective in this vision of changing youth male attitudes. There should be three fundamental concerns that support one another in a creative spiritual and theological

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<sup>89</sup>Matt 12:1-7



cooperation. Our thinking about our religious practice and belief should be a three-cornered conversation. This should include the Christian gospel, cultural context, and Baptist heritage that are the foundation of the researcher's theological identity.

Baptist experience, practice, and belief constitute a particular way of understanding that God loves the male and female creations so much that Jesus is sent to redeem every human creation. The character of God is love, which always exists everywhere enhancing the experience of God's created reality. This love allows people to see the calm in a storm and peace in a turbulent highly-charged situation. The gospel should be proclaimed through preaching, personal witness, and the use of a variety of media that should be the center of church activities.<sup>90</sup> The focus is on salvation of individuals throughout the world. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."<sup>91</sup> This mandate should give men, women, and male youth the conviction to obey the words of Jesus. The Baptist frame of reference calls for water baptism to symbolize a regenerated life and commitment to Christ. The Lord's Supper is re-enacted on the first Sunday of every month to symbolize the body and blood of Christ. There are many male youths who have been baptized through the Baptist context at the church who need to be shown that God will encourage their walk in life. God will bless them and allow for a life of peace and happiness as outlined in the Bible. This is possible in the Baptist context with men and women who desire this outcome.

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<sup>90</sup>Everett Goodwin, *The New Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995), 156.

<sup>91</sup>Mk 16:15

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The researcher of this project wanted to test the hypothesis of whether or not a mentoring ministry that focuses on male teenagers was a viable approach to change attitudes and increase participation in the church. The researcher after much thought used a three-fold approach for this project. The researcher preached a series of sermons to prepare the congregation for the project. The sermons were designed to inform the congregation of the responsibility God has for them to engage in youth ministry. These sermons heightened the awareness of the need for their commitment and funding from the church to proceed. The sermons also served as biblical ways of energizing the context associates who were critical to making this project a reality. Secondly, the researcher used story telling narratives in the youth sessions to generate a discussion within the group. The setting was in the basement of the researcher's house with everyone assembling around two tables. The sessions were designed to encourage participation in this non-formal setting. The narrative (scripture) was relayed in a calm steady manner with some pauses to focus on key points. These pauses allowed the researcher to ask a question about the characters in the narrative and gain responses. The youth appeared to be shy and non-responsive at the beginning of the first session, but began to participate with encouragement from the researcher. The questions from the narrative were structured to relate to their present context. The sessions were designed to conclude in twenty-five

minutes, but some lasted 30 minutes. Immediately following these narratives, the group began work on a web page that was designed for Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church.

The development of a web page allowed the youth to build a site that was of an immediate benefit to the church. The web page development lasted for 30 to 40 minutes, which added up to each session lasting 65 to 75 minutes. Thirdly, this project contained rewards for participating. The rewards were trips to a New Orleans Hornets basketball game in Greensboro, North Carolina and a basketball game played at North Carolina A & T State University also in Greensboro. The data collection method was quantitative and qualitative in nature. A pre-test was administered before the first session began and a post-test after the last session ended to generate numerical data.

### **The Process and Questionnaire**

The first stage of developing this project began with a meeting of the context associates. The context associates consisted of three men and one woman. The group met three times to plan the timeline and determine the project goals. The first meeting was used to brainstorm ideas from all of the associates. These ideas were written down and the list was narrowed to a few ideas. The researcher had already informed the group of his desire to include a web page in the project. The group and researcher decided to use a three-pronged approach to implementing the goals that had been established. It was agreed that each associate will participate in specific parts of the project and also function as support in other areas.

The researcher made a mental note of the male teenagers that attended the worship service for two weeks prior to the start of the project. The fourth Sunday of August, three male teenagers were present. The first Sunday of October had four male teenagers

present. This pastor and researcher included in the announcements for a month that this project would take place with rewards involved. One of the context associates was asked to contact all of the male teenagers that had an affiliation with Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church via (family) church members to explain the project. The first session of the project was scheduled and 11 teenagers were present. The teenagers that participated in the project were between the ages of 13 to 18 years of age. Any project of this type must have some rules that apply to the participants with regard to the rewards. The teenagers were told that to participate in the rewards, they must attend three-fourths of the sessions which included web page design.

Two associates volunteered to present story telling narratives. The researcher encouraged the associates to develop a narrative. Each agreed that the researcher would evaluate and offer suggestions to keep these stories short and simple with a practical application. The researcher prepared a narrative that he presented in the first session to serve as an example to the other associates in the method of presentation.

One of the associates worked with the researcher to organize the process that was necessary to build a web page for the church. The researcher and the associate decided to organize the teenagers into groups that had specific parts to do as their contribution to the web page. Some of the associates volunteered to be responsible for organizing the trips or rewards for participating in the project. The group and associates traveled together in the church van to the first event and had a group prayer before departing for Greensboro, North Carolina. The researcher had an opportunity to bond and have fun with these young men. There were four associates who participated in the first reward trip.

The success of the project was to be measured by having all participants answer the question on the pre-test/post-test. It was administered before the story-telling narrative

when the group met on the night of the first session. The pre-test/post-test contained only one question with the teenager circling twelve words to express their answer. It was designed to describe the possible attitude of the teenager toward the church. Words such as friendly, blessed, mean, odd, and old-fashioned were used to gain insight.

Most survey research is based on an underlying research design which is called “correlational” or “cross-sectional.” This means that data is collected on a cross-section of people at a single point in time in order to discover the ways and degrees to which variables relate to each other.<sup>1</sup> The experimental design is the main approach to data collection within the tradition of quantitative research.<sup>2</sup> The researcher of this project used an experimental design. In an experiment, there are at least two groups to which subjects have been randomly allocated: an experimental group and a control group.<sup>3</sup> The researcher had the difficult task of designing a pre-test/post-test for both groups that would not influence the teenagers to respond in a manner that they thought would please the researcher. It became a major concern to ensure that a response was as accurate as possible. The goal of the researcher was to accumulate true data from the pre-test/post-test. This pre-test/post-test consisted of 96 adjectives which were placed in 6 columns. Each column had 16 different adjectives with some having the same meaning, but many different words were present. The researcher realized that perception was different in these teenagers. So, although some words had the same meaning, it increased the likelihood of the teenager recognizing a word that reflected their true feelings. The reason

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<sup>1</sup>Alan Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research* (Boston, MA: Academic Division of Unwin Hyman Ltd, 1988), 11-13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 11.

for using 96 adjectives was to ensure that the youth had many different choices. It also provided a foundation for someone to follow up this project by narrowing the choices. The pre-test/post-test contained only one question, with the teenager asked to circle 12 answers. The question asked by the researcher was: "Circle 12 of the following adjectives that reflect your view of the church."

The researcher decided to ask the pastor of a local church to administer the pre-test to all the male teenagers (control group) in his church who were willing to participate. The Reverend gave the researcher 13 completed pre-test/post-test forms. The logic of experimental design was that the former group was exposed to an experimental stimulus (the independent variable) but the control group was not. Any observed differences between the two groups are deemed to be due to the independent variables alone, since the two groups are identical in all other aspects. This gives the researcher a clearer picture of the pre-test conditions of the teenagers with a larger test pool to analyze and compare with the post-test administered to only the experimental group. The 11 teenagers (experimental group) that participated from the Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church were the only ones to answer the post-test which was the same test given before the project begins. The evaluation of the post-test allows the researcher to determine the success of the independent variables. The narratives were considered a major piece in the project using images in the presentation to stimulation an active discussion.

It was hard to imagine Christian preaching without the power and beauty of images-both those from the Bible and those from the preacher's own experience, added to give current dept and clarification to the message. Image-making and storytelling are part of the faith. The faith continues to generate them. Preaching is also

incarnation-putting ideas and theological abstractions into warm and living pictures, with all the danger involved in that.<sup>4</sup>

The researcher agreed with Killinger that images are a powerful tool to convey the gospel message and so they were used in the sessions. The story of Joseph (Gen. 37:18-24; 19-30) demonstrated a lesson on peer pressure from two different perspectives. Joseph did not allow peer pressure to change his mind about the scheme of his brothers. He knew it was wrong and a sin to lie to his father about the sheep. The decision that Joseph made caused him some pain, but God in the future blesses Joseph in a mighty way because of his conviction to do what is right. The other instance of peer pressure comes from the brother who spoke up and saved the life of Joseph. He encouraged his brothers to put Joseph in the well. He later returned to the pit and discovered that Joseph is gone. He tore his clothes to grieve for what he believed was the death of Joseph. This proved that he loved Joseph and wished him no harm. The lesson was that peer pressure can make you do things that you know are wrong, believing that you can fix a situation without upsetting the crowd. This brother should have taken the same position as Joseph, which was to stand for right.

The narratives were presented this way with a plan to paint a picture of the scene and situation with practical application added for these teenagers to consider. These stories were told at the home of the researcher in an unstructured setting, to relax people so that they might reveal their true feelings about the story. It allowed this pastor and researcher time to bond with these teenagers on issues that were relevant during the researcher's teenage years and those of the associates. This Millennial generation is experiencing the same growing pains as any generation. The difference is the context in

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<sup>4</sup>Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching*, 117.

which they live day to day. The researcher desired to plant seeds in the teenagers that would develop into faith and cause spiritual development.

The web page design was a major part of this project because it allowed these teenagers to feel that they were making a positive contribution to the church. Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church will have a web page that features the pastor and church leaders as well as many pictures of church life. The teenagers were excited about the prospect of building this web page. The researcher bought a book titled *Web Pages for Dummies* to help during the beginning of the process. The experimental group informed the researcher (pastor) that many of them had learned how to produce a web page in computer class at school. The first session was one where they decided a host of issues that needed to be addressed. Examples included background color, style of font, pages needed, and titles of pages in the web site. The researcher listed many items which were a starting point for the project. All of the youth in the experimental group were assigned a part. The youth were energetic and determined to finish their part. The Guiding Light Missionary Baptist Association has a page in this web site. This page required that a teenager take pictures at the annual session which was held in October. The picture quality was not the highest but was sufficient to demonstrate the activities of the session. One minister at the annual session was tested before the ordination council and passed the test. The presentation of his ordination certificate was captured and uploaded to the web site. Many other pictures were present that required someone to go and get information or take the pictures that appeared on the web site. The youth page included a picture of a number of the teenagers who participated in this project. There were a number of children who participated in sports activities in the city of Lexington. Cheerleaders and a football player from the little league were on the site. This web site was an overwhelming success and is



to be maintained by the experimental group. Birthdays and church events are to be updated monthly. The site is to be changed and upgraded when new ways are discovered to improve it. The youth have a church project now that they are responsible for maintaining. It allows the researcher to work closely with them on this site and hopefully other projects in the future.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FIELD EXPERIENCE**

#### **Demographics**

Twenty-three Millennial teenagers agreed to participate in the pre-test with eleven of these from the experimental group. The age of the participants in both groups was thirteen to eighteen years of age. All of these teenagers attended Lexington Senior High or Lexington Middle School. It was possible that the teenagers talked about having participated in this pre/test at their various schools. Lexington is a small town and this is one of the reasons only the experimental group participated in the post/test. Another reason was that the experimental group was the only group exposed to the independent variables. This increased the accuracy of the data collected and charted any change that occurred. The ages of the participants are listed below with no one under thirteen or older than eighteen years of age. Listed below is the breakdown of these age groups.

30.43 percent (7) were 14 years of age; 26.08 percent (6) were 13 years of age; 26.08 percent (6) were 16 years of age; 13.04 percent (3) were 15 years of age; 4.3 percent (1) is 17 years of age; and 4.3 percent (1) is 18 years of age. These percentages represent the “cross-sectional” breakdown of the experimental and control group participating in the pre-test.

30.76 percent (4) were 13 years of age; 30.76 percent (4) were 14 years of age; 15.38 percent (2) were 15 years of age; and 23.07 percent (3) were 16 years of age. These

percentages represent the breakdown of the control group. These teenagers are members of Files Chapel Baptist Church located in Lexington, North Carolina. This group participates only in the pre-test.

27.27 percent (3) were 14 years of age; 27.27 percent (3) were 16 years of age; 18.18 percent (2) were 13 years of age; 9.09 percent (1) is 15 years of age; 9.09 percent (1) is 17 years of age; and 9.09 percent (1) is 18 years of age. These percentages represent the breakdown of the experimental group. The teenagers in this group are members of Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church or have been affiliated with the church through family members. The experimental group participated in the pre-test and the post-test.

### **Evaluation of the Pre-test/Post-test**

The function of the survey was to measure the attitude of the teenagers before the project with the pre-test and the impact of the narratives, web page design, and rewards (independent variables) on the experimental group via the post-test. The researcher's hypothesis was that a mentoring ministry that focuses on changing the male attitude is a viable way to increase spiritual development and attendance. The quantitative and qualitative approach was used with an experimental design on the survey to gain insight into the mindset of the millennial generation regarding the church. The following information reflects the question and answers of participants gathered from the pre-test/post-test survey. The numerical data generated from the pre-test/post-test was tabulated by taking the total number of respondents for the survey and evaluating the responses from the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test/post-test surveys were identical with the independent variables applied to the experimental group or teenagers from Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church.

The data of the pre-test/post-test is to be presented in three ways. The first way is to show the percentage of answers to the pre-test by the control group. Secondly, the answers to the pre-test in percentages by the experimental group are to be displayed. Thirdly, the pre-test percentages by both groups combined are to be displayed with a comparison to the post-test answers by the experimental group. An analysis follows with comments by the researcher as the results unfold.

### **Control Group**

These millennial teenagers (control group) were asked this question. "Circle 12 of the following adjectives that reflect your view of the church?" 46.15 percent said that the church is big; 61.53 percent said wonderful; 23.07 said pretty; 30.76 percent said old-fashioned; 38.46 percent said kind, 23.07 percent said mighty; 7.69 percent said mature; 15.38 percent said unselfish; 46.15 percent said stylish; 15.38 percent said appreciated; 30.76 percent said cheerful; 23.07 percent said open; 7.69 percent said grumpy; 38.46 percent said friendly; 61.53 percent said blessed; 7.69 percent said patient; 23.07 percent said safe; 30.76 percent said generous; 7.69 percent said truth worth; 7.69 percent said idealistic; 23.07 percent said funny; 7.69 percent said tough; 15.38 percent said precious; 7.69 percent said crazy; 38.46 percent said popular; 30.76 percent said helpful; 15.38 percent said committed; 7.69 percent said sensitive; 30.76 percent said great; 7.69 percent said unique; 38.46 percent said good; 7.69 percent said ordinary; 23.07 percent said successful; 23.07 percent said thoughtful; 7.69 percent said fast; 23.07 percent said proud; 7.69 percent said routine; 7.69 percent said normal; 15.38 percent said religious; 7.69 percent said considerate; 30.76 percent said full-of-feeling; 30.76 percent said educational; 15.38 percent said easy-going; 38.46 percent said happy; 38.46 percent said serious; 7.69

percent said orderly; 15.38 percent said cool; 15.38 percent said fair; 15.38 percent said faithful; 23.07 percent said responsible; and 15.38 percent said spiritual.

### **Experimental Group**

The Millennial teenagers in the experimental group were asked to respond to the pre-test as described above. 18.18 percent said wonderful; 9.09 percent said pretty; 18.18 percent said old-fashioned; 18.18 percent said kind; 18.18 percent said mighty; 18.18 percent said orderly; 18.18 percent said mature; 27.27 percent said correct; 18.18 percent said unselfish; 9.09 percent said stylish; 9.09 percent said reserved; 36.36 percent said open; 18.18 percent said decent; 9.09 percent said lively; 45.45 percent said friendly; 54.54 percent said blessed; 9.09 percent said modern; 18.18 percent said safe; 9.09 percent said generous; 9.09 percent said truth worth; 9.09 percent said funny; 18.18 percent said popular; 63.63 percent said helpful; 9.09 percent said fascinating; 27.27 percent said committed; 9.09 percent said sensitive; 27.27 said calm; 9.09 percent said high-spirited; 9.09 percent said wild; 9.09 percent said great; 54.54 percent said good; 18.18 percent said ordinary; 18.18 percent said successful; 9.09 percent said fussy; 36.36 percent said thoughtful; 18.18 percent said proud; 9.09 percent said strange; 45.45 percent said normal; 9.09 percent said moral; 9.09 percent said famous; 54.54 percent said religious; 9.09 percent said full-of-feeling; 36.36 percent said educational; 9.09 percent said outdated; 18.18 percent said easy-going; 18.18 percent said content; 27.27 percent said happy; 36.36 percent said serious; 9.09 percent said orderly; 54.54 percent said cool; 36.36 percent said fair; 36.36 percent said faithful; 18.18 percent said loyal; 27.27 percent said responsible; and 27.27 percent said spiritual.

### Cross-sectional Response

The cross-sectional response of those participating in the pre-test are listed below.

25 percent said big; 41.66 percent said wonderful; 16.6 percent said pretty; 25 percent said old-fashioned; 29.16 percent said kind; 20.83 percent said mighty; 16.6 percent said orderly; 4.16 percent said mature; 12.5 percent said correct; 16.6 percent said unselfish; 29.16 percent said stylish; 4.16 percent said reserved; 8.3 percent said appreciated; 16.6 percent said cheerful; 29.16 said open; 8.3 percent said decent; 4.16 percent said lively; 4.16 percent said grumpy; 41.66 percent said friendly; 58.33 percent said blessed; 4.16 percent said patient; 4.16 percent said modern; 20.83 percent said safe; 20.83 percent said generous; 8.3 percent said truth worth; 16.6 percent said funny; 4.16 percent said idealistic; 29.16 percent said popular; 4.16 percent said tough; 8.3 percent said precious; 4.16 percent said crazy; 45.83 percent said helpful; 4.16 percent said fascinating; 20.83 percent said committed; 8.3 percent said sensitive; 12.5 percent said calm; 16.6 percent said high-spirited; 4.16 percent said wild; 20.83 percent said great; 4.16 percent said unique; 45.83 percent said good; 12.5 percent said ordinary; 20.83 percent said successful; 4.16 percent said fuzzy; 29.16 percent said thoughtful; 4.16 percent said fast; 20.83 percent said proud; 4.16 percent said routine; 25 percent said normal; 4.16 percent said strange; 4.16 percent said moral; 4.16 percent said famous; 33.33 percent said religious; 4.16 percent said considerate; 20.83 percent said full-of-feeling; 33.3 percent said educational; 4.16 percent said outdated; 16.6 percent said easygoing; 8.3 percent said content; 33.3 percent said happy; 37.5 percent said serious; 33.3 percent said cool; 25 percent said fair; 25 percent said faithful; 8.3 percent said loyal; 25 percent said responsible; and 20.83 percent said spiritual.

### **Post-test Results**

The post-test response of the experimental group is listed below. 16.6 percent said wonderful; 33.3 percent said correct; 16.6 percent said reserved; 16.6 percent said appreciated; 50 percent said cheerful; 50 percent said friendly; 50 percent said blessed; 33.3 percent said helpful; 33.3 percent said fascinating; 33.3 percent said committed; 33.3 percent said educational; 33.3 percent said fair; 16.6 percent said loyal; 33.3 percent said old-fashioned; 50 percent said open; 16.6 percent said kind; 33.3 percent said mighty; 50 percent said high-spirited; 33.3 percent said good; 50 percent said normal; 66.6 percent said religious; 66.6 percent said spiritual; 16.6 percent said orderly; 50 percent said safe; 50 percent said full-of-feeling; 16.6 percent said content; 16.6 percent said serious; 16.6 percent said merry; 33.3 percent said faithful; 16.6 percent said mature; 16.6 percent said appreciated; 16.6 percent said decent; 33.3 percent said truth worth; 16.6 percent said calm; 16.6 percent said responsible; 33.3 percent said great; and 16.6 percent said unique.

The pre-test cross-sectional results will now be compared to the post-test results to evaluate any movement in the answers caused by the independent variables.

### **Pre-test and Post-test Analysis**

The pre-test served to establish a perception of the church through the eyes of these teenagers. An effort had been made to lay the foundation for a large pool of teenagers to participate in the pre-test with age being a major factor. This pre-test involved only the 13-to-18 year age group. The post-test involved only the teenagers of the Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church family. The hypothesis was that story telling

narratives, web page design, and rewards could change attitudes toward the church. The comparison of the pre-test/post-test includes words that gained a 25 percent response.

**Comparison:** The word “big” yielded a 25 percent response in the pre-test and no response in the post-test. The word “correct” yielded a 12.5 percent response in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent response in the post-test. The word “wonderful” yielded a 41.66 percent response in the pre-test and a 16.6 percent response in the post-test. The word “old fashioned” yielded a 25 percent response in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent response in the post-test. The word “kind” yielded a 29.16 percent response in the pre-test and a 16.6 percent response in the post-test. The word “stylish” yielded a 29.16 percent response in the pre-test and no response in the post-test. The word “friendly” yielded a 41.66 percent response in the pre-test and a 50 percent response in the post-test. The word “popular” yielded a 29.16 percent response in the pre-test and no response in the post-test. The word “thoughtful” yielded a 29.16 percent response and no response in the post-test. The word “normal” yielded a 25 percent response and a 50 percent response in the post-test. The word “educational” yielded a 33.3 percent response in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent response in the post-test. The word “cheerful” yielded a 16.6 percent response in the pre-test and a 50 percent response in the post-test. The word “blessed” yielded a 58.33 percent response in the pre-test and a 50 percent response in the post-test. The word “helpful” yielded a 45.83 percent response in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent response in the post-test. The word “fascinating” yielded a 4.16 percent response in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent response in the post-test. The word “committed” yielded a 20.83 percent response in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent response in the post-test. The word “fair” yielded a 25 percent response in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent response in the post-test. The word “open” yielded a 29.16 percent response in the pre-test and a 50



percent response in the post-test. The word “mighty” yielded a 20.83 percent response in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent response in the post-test. The word “high-spirited” yielded 16.6 percent and a 50 percent response on the post-test. The word “religious” yielded 33.3 percent in the pre-test and a 66.6 percent response in the post-test. The word “spiritual” yielded 20.83 percent and a 66.6 percent response in the post-test. The word “safe” yielded 20.83 percent in the pre-test and a 50 percent response in the post-test. The words “full-of-feeling” yielded 20.83 percent in the pre-test and a 50 percent response in the post-test. The word “faithful” yielded 25 percent in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent in the post-test. The words “truth worth” yielded 8.3 percent response in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent response in the post-test. The word “great” yielded a 20.83 percent in the pre-test and a 33.3 percent response in the post-test. The word “cool” yielded a 33 percent response in the pre-test and no response in the post-test.

These surveys produced some interesting results. The researcher made a comparison of the 12 circled words on the pre-test/post-test to determine the percentages. The words that had a 25 percent selection rate were compared. This total was 19 words on the pre-test and 22 words on the post-test. The pre-test/post-test percentages are listed in the appendices in the form of bar charts. The researcher will now compare and comment on the top eight words with the highest percentages.

1. The word “blessed” drew 58.33 percent on the pre-test and 50 percent on the post-test. These high numbers are fairly consistent and show that these teenagers have a high respect for the church.
2. The word “old-fashioned” drew 25 percent on the pre-test and 33.3 percent on the post-test. This shows that perhaps the church should talk more openly on perceptions of the church with these teenagers. The church

has the same type of preaching. They appear to be open to change. The style of communication with these teenagers must become a focus in the church.

3. The word “religious” drew 33.3 percent on the pre-test and 66.6 percent on the post-test. This is a huge difference between the two tests and suggests that they believe that a faith exists in the church.
4. The word “friendly” drew 41.66 percent on the pre-test and 50 percent on the post-test. This would suggest to the researcher that these teenagers see a friendly attitude among the worshippers in church.
5. The word “normal” drew 25 percent on the pre-test and 50 percent on the post-test. There are some churches that are practicing many different worship styles and it is good that they believe the church is normal.
6. The word “open” drew 29.16 percent on the pre-test and 50 percent on the post-test. The church tries to portray an attitude that any person is welcome regardless of nationality. These teenagers see the church as open to all people.
7. The word “educational” drew 33.3 percent on the pre-test and 33.3 percent on the post-test. The researcher believes that the teenagers feel the church is a place to learn.
8. The word “spiritual” drew 20.83 percent on the pre-test and 66.6 percent on the post-test. The researcher believes this is significant because spiritual can imply that the teenagers see God as a living spirit.

This researcher has learned much from this pre-test/post-test that gives insight into the mindset of these Millennial teenagers. It is impossible to create a productive ministry

project without input from these young men. Overall, there is some positive movement in some words to suggest that the sessions made a difference.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION**

The intent of this process was to gain the attention of the male teenagers at Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church with a project that would change attitudes and lead to spiritual development. The Word of God contains a faith message that strengthens the hearer who believes. The time has come when the church must take a look at why the church is becoming increasingly female. Men, women, boys, and girls are all made in the image of God with the spirit of God ever present. There should be a more balanced make-up of church membership. The Old Testament has many themes, but one says that the man should teach to his children the ways and knowledge of God. This evidence is in the scripture used in the biblical foundation piece. The writer of this dissertation was shaped heavily by the male influences of his youth. It was more than a conversation he encountered, but a way of life that demonstrated role models who were happy and at peace with God. There are so many memories of this that emerge from the mind of this researcher everyday.

The deacon discussed in Chapter One was an example of a strong presence in the community. The example that the researcher used came when he was a teenager. The deacon has gone to be with the Lord, but the researcher will never forget one of the last visits with him. He was at an advanced age and his body had begun to break down, leaving him bedridden. The researcher entered the house and moved to the room that had been set

up with a hospital bed. He immediately began to smile and said "Keedem, how are you and your family?" The glow that is only possible when you are at peace with God was all over him. When the researcher asked how he was doing, the deacon said, "Fine, the Lord is still blessing me." The researcher left the room in awe and later prayed that God would be with him and give the researcher that much strength and peace.

The researcher did not understand the passion that was in his heart to make a difference in the lives of young men. The spiritual autobiography was a required part of this project which allowed the researcher to see clearly that God used people (role models, mentors) to prepare him for a leadership role in the African American Baptist Church. The idea that teenage boys are missing on Sunday morning was disturbing and alarming to this pastor and researcher. This project allowed the researcher to form a relationship with all the male teenagers that have ever attended Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church. Even though many are still sporadic in their attendance on Sunday morning, the researcher intends to continue planting seeds whenever possible, always demonstrating the benefits of Christ's love. With the help of God, a continuing effort is to be made to develop ways to reach out to the present generation of male youths with the gospel message and the benefits of the faith. The researcher has a twelve-year-old in the church whose mother is on crack cocaine. The boy is developing behavior problems due to his mother's condition. The church should have a system in place that rallies the adult male members to help this young man through this difficult time. No one has all the right answers, but God will lead the church down the path of truth and peace.

Many male teenagers see the church as a place that hinders their ability to do many normal things. The researcher grew up during a time when the church condemned dances and a long list of things. The parents of the researcher allowed him to grow up and prayed

that he would learn the lessons of life. The afro, bell bottom pants, platform shoes, and dashikis were a style that identified with the look of the seventies. Today, young men wear baggy pants and the afro is back in style. They wear their hat backwards and own ear rings and jewelry pieces. This look should not be the focus of judging a person and putting them into a category. The emphasis should be on spiritual development and faith building. The adult Christian should be a seed planter who waters the growing youth with the gospel message of Jesus.

This researcher believes that preaching plays an important role in the life of the church and is the vehicle to positive change in the life of the hearer. The heading for this focus group was “Preaching and Leadership” which was needed for the Millennium generation in the church. This researcher has heard some of the prominent preachers of this era. Dr. James Massey, Dr. Cleophus LaRue, and Dr. Olin Moyd are some of the preachers encountered on this project journey. The researcher has enjoyed the process of reading and studying all of the material available on youth ministry. The resources are vast for studying the many different aspects of youth development. The different surveys available online have pointed to specific data that was used in this project. The researcher intends to spend time and resources to develop other ways to expose youth to the faith.

### **Summary**

This project has taken many months of sweat and tears to become a reality in this researcher’s life. The researcher has preached a series of sermons on the importance of youth ministry in the life of the church. The first meeting of the context associates took place at the home of Deacon Holt. These men and one woman agreed to participate in the development of this project. The first meeting was productive with the researcher leading

a brainstorming session to produce ideas for putting this project together. The ideas were written down with a second meeting scheduled to reduce the list to a doable project. The researcher knew that he desired to have a sermon (narrative story telling) as one of the independent variables to affect the view of the youth toward the church. The group agreed with two context associates volunteering to present narratives with the researcher offering comments in the preparation stage. The researcher presented the first narrative which is shown in Appendix B. These narratives were no more than twenty minutes in length and were presented at the beginning of each session. The narratives involved an informal discussion of the story and its meaning. The narratives were important but the crown jewel of this project was the web page.

The web page was an idea that gave these teenagers a hands-on job in the ministry at Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church. After the first narrative, a discussion was moderated by the researcher as to who will be responsible for the many different parts of designing the web page. The web design needed people to take pictures, and to accumulate data on several pages to be included within the site. Two teenagers gathered data on the Ministers Alliance of Lexington. Others gathered data on the church and leadership team with many pictures. The Guiding Light Missionary Baptist Association annual session occurred in Statesville, North Carolina. Pictures were taken and are featured on the site.

Enough cannot be said about how these young men worked on this web page. The researcher bought a book titled *Web Pages for Dummies* to help with possible questions that might surface. The teenagers informed the researcher that most of them had learned how to build a web page in computer class. They knew what to do and the process began after the second session. Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church now has a web page that

these young men will update as needed. They now have a means of participating in church life.

This project also had rewards that the teenagers could gain through participating in the project. The ground rules were simple and explained at the first session. To become eligible for the rewards the teenager was required to attend two-thirds of the sessions leading up to the trip. Two reward trips were scheduled and included attending the New Orleans Hornets, Washington Wizards basketball game held in Greensboro, North Carolina. The second reward was a trip to a basketball game on the campus of North Carolina A&T State University.

This project started with eleven teenagers in the experimental group (Old Smith Grove teenagers). There was a dropout of two teenagers within the second week. Weeks three and four produced three more dropouts. The remaining six members of the experimental group remained and came together to finish the web page. Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church has on average only two or three teenage males in attendance on Sunday morning. The two weeks upon completion of this project produced three male teenagers each Sunday. This was not a dramatic increase, but it was a beginning. The teenagers who maintain the web page will come into contact with the researcher and the context associates. The hope of the researcher was that this contact will produce an opportunity for the researcher to discuss situations they encounter and plant the seed of faith by living a life that was pleasing in the sight of God.

### **Conclusion**

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the process involved in the implementation of this project. The model shows some movement in the way that the



experimental group views the church. These young men were caught in a traditional ministry approach until the birth of this model. They appeared from the pulpit to be bored and disengaged from the worship experience. Their numbers in church during the worship hour are low. One of the ways to change this dismal view of the male youth was to use the men and women of the church. They must show a vision of the possibilities available for the youth if the leaders desire spiritual development to take place. This was what happened during the design phase and implementation of this model. Leadership was one of the titles of this Doctor of Ministry group and it has to occur with a confidence that allows the team (context associates) to see the benefits of the model. Leadership involves patience, understanding, and temperance towards everyone participating. The researcher used a group first approach.

Secondly, practical theology must become a means of transforming the youth of the church because it emphasizes the context in which they exist every day. The researcher strongly believes that preaching (sermon narratives) should become a means to deliver and trigger faith or self analysis by the hearer. The researcher and context associates purposefully delivered stories that the teenagers could identify with in life. The post-modern generation desires to know more about God, but needs the saints to address the questions they have about God. The researcher has mentioned many times that creating new paradigms of ministry could energize or trigger action from the male youth.

These new paradigms do not corrupt the Word of God which believers proclaim in the Bible. They only alter the presentation with a commitment to the spirit and letter of how God desires for the creation to live successfully. This work will hopefully inspire some researcher to examine the content of this document that they might allow the spirit to use them in a way that benefits some form of youth ministry in God's church.

Thirdly, this project reveals some potential benefits that can be addressed at a later time. Specifically, the researcher is referring to the web page designed by the male youth. The male youth of Old Smith Grove View Baptist Church could potentially become consultants for churches that are considering a web page for their churches. This would allow them to earn an income while providing a service that benefits the church.

Lastly, the use of rewards as a means of drawing reluctant male youth to participate must be addressed. This project used every male youth who ever attended or had family members in this particular rural church. The researcher believes that rewards are an acceptable way to draw them into the project. The thinking was that, if they attended these sessions and interacted with the researcher and associates, seed faith can be planted. The reviews on the use of rewards are mixed because some youth dropped out despite the allure of rewards. The rule agreed to by the group stated that you must attend two-thirds of the sessions to qualify for rewards. Some of the youth had various excuses for missing some of the sessions and they were not allowed to participate in the field trips and therefore dropped out of the project. The researcher thinks that rewards allow the youth to see the pastor in a different way when they go off to see the basketball game. The researcher was blessed to have had the opportunity to implement a project that he believes was new and fresh in our desire to make a difference in male youth ministry.

**APPENDIX A**  
**SERMON—SIGN ON THE DOORPOST**

## New American Standard

### Deuteronomy 6:1-10

“Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it,

<sup>2</sup>so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

<sup>3</sup>“O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do *it*, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, *in* a land flowing with milk and honey.

<sup>4</sup>“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

<sup>5</sup>“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

<sup>6</sup>“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

<sup>7</sup>You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

<sup>8</sup>“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

<sup>9</sup>“You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

<sup>10</sup>“Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build,

## Introduction

We realize that without signs there would be a lot of mass confusion going on in the world. When you get into your automobile and drive, it is good to have some signs along the way. Whenever we go to an area that is unknown to us, the first thing we do is go to the map. We welcome signs and understand the important impact they have in everyday life. The law requires that a driver obey the signs. Any individual who fails to yield or stop at the sign can cause an accident. We are thankful that society has signs to direct the masses in a way that is safe. There are many other types of signs that are not always seen that help to dictate the direction that we travel.

### **Conclusion**

Moses told them everything they needed to know and yet they failed. But I am so glad that we serve a merciful God who forgives our weaknesses when we come to our senses. God could destroy us with the twinkling of an eye, but instead sent Jesus to show men, women, boys and girls how to live a life for God. Jesus showed that people may knock you down but God picks you up and still gains the victory. We must have that sign on our doorpost that says this is a house of the Lord. School is in session and when the test day comes I am prepared to pass the test. Teach the children that Jesus is the answer and not the use of drugs. Jesus is the answer and not a gang family. Jesus is the answer to a continuing change in the world. The sign on the doorpost will produce results because God said so. The sign in the kitchen, the sign in the living room, the sign in the bathroom, and the sign in the bedroom says I believe, I believe, I believe. God leads this family from the youngest to the oldest and we pray together.

### **Purpose**

To remind the Christian family that God requires them to teach the children and live the Christian life at home and in the church.

### **Sign On the Doorpost**

We realize that without signs there would be a lot of mass confusion going on in the world. When you get into your automobile and drive, it is good to have some signs along the way. Whenever we go to an area that is unknown to us the first thing we do is go to the map. We welcome signs and understand the important impact they have in everyday life. The law requires that a driver obey the signs. Any individual who fails to

yield or stop at the sign can cause an accident. We are thankful that society has signs to direct the masses in a way that is safe. There are many other types of signs that are not always seen that help to dictate the direction that we travel.

When you focus on the scripture this morning a different kind of sign comes to mind. The speaker in the morning scripture is Moses and we need to discuss what he is describing in this sermon to the people. The Israelites are about to enter the Promised Land and many of them have not been witnesses to the transactions in the wilderness. The former generations have been destroyed or they have died of old age. Joshua and Caleb are the only persons allowed to enter the Promised Land. This scripture can be described as a sermon and Moses moves to impress on their hearts a deep obligation to God. The Lord wants to prepare them for the inheritance of the land that had been promised. Let us look at some of the things that had taken place. Moses repeats the occurrences of the past forty years in this chapter of Deuteronomy. Moses wants to show them the absolute necessity of fearing God, loving God, and obeying God. He repeats the 10 commandments and explains each one of them in detail. He wants them to know that failure to keep the commandments can result in judgment against them. Deuteronomy demonstrates the last sermons that Moses preaches before he moves off the scene giving up the ghost and yielding the leadership position to Joshua. The preaching in this chapter of Deuteronomy is aimed at equipping the people for a prosperous life in a pluralistic context. There are many things that they can have whether they need them or not in this context. Does that sound familiar brothers and sisters? Do we not live in a context where the whole society is measured by what you are able to acquire? I did not say what we need, but what we can have to achieve a measure of happiness and peace. I possess a little six inch television that I just had to buy thinking how happy it would make me. It operates on two triple A

batteries and can be strapped around your neck and held in your hand. My wife asked why do you need a small television. I replied that if I was off on a trip that the television might be a way to see a game. This society has a million different items that are made for us to purchase whether we need them or not. So we should be able to understand the concern Moses has with people moving to this type of context.

This sermon is preached so they might understand what brings true happiness when they are settled. Let me show you how God works and shows love for the people. God has given this sermon to Moses because everything is known by God today, tomorrow, and forever. Let us examine some of the things that happen in the Promised Land after they move there. A crisis existed that is partly religious because loyalty to God has been undermined by the worship of the gods of Canaan. The local sanctuary is scattered throughout the countryside with the God of Israel and the god of the Canaanites worshipped side by side. To make matters worse, some of the prophets are authorizing the worship of these false gods. This is one thing that causes God to be displeased with them. Let us examine this 2002 setting in which we live today where there is only one true God. This society also contains many false gods that are worshiped today, and if we are not careful they can influence us to sin against God the Father of heaven and earth. The lifestyle of the rich and famous with the material rewards cause us to desire fame and fortune. There is nothing wrong with God's people desiring to have good things but the worship of these things is a sin. Our aim should be to live this life with a thankful spirit to what the Lord God has blessed.

The second problem in the land of Canaan is social with the breakdown of family values due to social change. The economy had shifted from an agricultural one to an exchange of money becoming the norm. Goods and services are now being traded with

money. This monetary economy allows people to accumulate money thus causing a shift in power. This results in a problem when farmers begin to lose their land due to loans. When they fail to pay the loan back, the farmer and their family are enslaved. God is not pleased that people are using each other to acquire money. Does that sound familiar to the ways of the world in this 2002 society that we live? The newspapers and television reports are full of men and women who have used their position in large corporations to steal money, causing the small investor to lose savings that are meant for retirement. They use insider trading to determine when to buy and sell, causing the prices to fall. The working man or woman has no chance against these people. God is not pleased with this type of behavior and the greed that lives in the nature of these people. Greed causes a crisis in Canaan and it is causing a crisis today.

The third problem they have is political with the judicial system becoming corrupted by bribery and unfair treatment administered to the poor. Does that sound familiar to us brothers and sisters? Money will allow people to hire the best lawyer to influence juries and judges. Poor people are stuck with a public defender that has no motivation to go the extra mile for their defendants. Many times a poor defense can result in an innocent person being convicted of a crime. God is not pleased when a consistent effort is not made to find the truth in these court cases.

Moses preached this sermon to let them know that fearing God and keeping the commandments is the way to peace. Therefore, when the people enter into this pluralistic society they will be able to function within the will of God. Now we can see the picture that is to be the fate of Israel in the Promised Land. Let us now review the sermon that Moses is preaching to teach the people. Verse one in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy says: "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD



your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it.” The Lord has taught Moses what he needs to train the people for the challenges they would encounter. God has already told them that the land would be theirs to possess. However, before they enter, Moses wants them to focus on the challenges ahead. This would ensure that they keep their eyes on God and not temptations. The Lord wants us the people of this time to keep the commandments. When we do not keep the commandments of God we open ourselves for the devil to come in and attack. Keeping the commandments gives the saints peace where a storm is brewing.

Moses says: “God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.” In other words the people should pass the commandments of God to all generations. The future generations would prosper because they obeyed God. “He says hear O Israel and observe do it that it may be well with thee that thou might increase mightily.” Obeying God allows the blessing to come bringing joy and peace of mind to our lives. God will give you a spirit that does not allow other people to destroy your health or sin through retaliation. “Hear O Israel the Lord our God is one God that thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and with all thy might.” We hear this verse often, but does it sink into the heart and become a part of us in this spiritual walk? We must learn to truly love the Lord, trust the Lord, because a time may come when no other source can right a situation but God. Then, putting the situation in God’s hand will allow for the victory to be won. This type of mindset gets up in the morning and says, “Lord I thank you for waking me up this morning.” It is a love that, during the day, says a little prayer to God.

In verse 6, Moses says: "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart." In other words, what Moses is about to teach should be internalized because this lesson will be used in the battles of life. When you enter into a land like Canaan, God will come through because our direction is guided by divine direction. If the love of God is missing in our hearts and there is no fear that God may leave us, the instructions in verse 7 cannot be followed. "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." Moses is saying that we need to have a home where God is the center of the family. This home should consist of a routine that shapes the heart to obey God. Reading scripture together, praying together, and recognizing the blessings of God together. The children must be taught "diligently" the law of God in the home. When the children grow up in this pluralistic society, the world has a major impact on their decisions. God says through Moses that many things will happen but we can avoid the trap. We live in a society where our children face many more challenges. They need the teaching from home to prosper in the context in which they live. Each succeeding generation passes down the teaching and that family stays within the will of God. "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." The sign on the front of our house can be many things. But Moses says the sign should read that God is in this house. This can discourage people from coming to your house with a lot of mess that is designed to steal our joy. They see that the children are growing with a system that God blesses and rewards. There should be a sign on our doorpost that may not be visible, but it shows that God resides at this place. Moses is all about preparing the people for things to come, but everything will be alright. Do not worry about the obstacles this life presents

because God will bless our obedience. People may worship false gods but we do not worry, because we know the true God. Our desire must be to operate in Gods will while teaching our children to operate within the will of God.

Let us move forward this morning and understand that we are living under the grace of God. We have joy because of the fact that Jesus came down and showed us the way. Jesus came and he taught us all about the true way of God. Jesus came to tell us what we need to know. Jesus came before us and did miracles, healed the sick in mind, body, and soul. Jesus did more than preach a sermon and say follow the law. Jesus loved the little children and we can recall how they praised him in the temple. Jesus said that we all need to be like little children if our desire is to enter the kingdom of God. There is more help for us today than what the people have when they moved into Canaan land. We have Jesus on our side, interceding on our behalf. The picture on the doorpost is Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Moses tells them everything they needed to know and yet they fail. But I am so glad that we serve a merciful God who forgives our weaknesses when we come to our senses. God could destroy us in the twinkling of an eye, but instead sent Jesus to show men, women, boys and girls how to live a life for God. Jesus showed that people may knock you down but God picks you up and still gains the victory. We must have that sign on our doorpost that says this is a house of the Lord. School is in session and, when the test day comes, I am prepared to pass the test. Teach the children that Jesus is the answer and not Drugs. Jesus is the answer and not a gang family. Jesus is the answer to a continuing change in the world. The sign on the doorpost will produce results because God said so. The sign in the kitchen, the sign in the living room, the sign in the bathroom,

and the sign in the bedroom says I believe, I believe, I believe. God leads this family from the youngest to the oldest and we pray together.

The children watch what we do and how the parents act and how all the family members act. They must see a life that does not live a double life in the church and at home. Put the sign on the door post and do as the Lord Commands.

**APPENDIX B**  
**STORY TELLING NARRATIVE—PEER PRESSURE**

**Youth Group Session 1**  
**Presenter: Reverend Curry**

**New American Standard**

**Genesis 37:18-24; 29-30**

<sup>18</sup>When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death.

<sup>19</sup>They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer!

<sup>20</sup>“Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, ‘A wild beast devoured him.’ Then let us see what will become of his dreams!”

<sup>21</sup>But Reuben heard *this* and rescued him out of their hands and said, “Let us not take his life.”

<sup>22</sup>Reuben further said to them, “Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father.

<sup>23</sup>So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him;

<sup>24</sup>and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it.

<sup>29</sup>Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; so he tore his garments.

<sup>30</sup>He returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is not *there*; as for me, where am I to go?”

**Purpose:** Peer pressure can cause you to make unwise decisions.

### Peer Pressure

I want to tell you a story about a young man called Joseph who was very wise. Joseph did things the right way and did not believe in taking short cuts to achieve his desires. He had many brothers and his father often sent them into the fields to tend the sheep. The boys and their father knew exactly how many sheep that the family owned. These brothers designed a plan to kill one of the sheep for food and make it look like a wild animal had attacked this defenseless animal. They went back to their father and told him that they were one sheep short in the flock. They even brought the skin back as proof of what they say had happened. The brothers try to convince Joseph to go along with the scheme, but he refused, believing it was wrong to lie to his father. When Joseph returned home, he tells his father exactly what the other boys had done. The other brothers became angry with Joseph because they knew that their father favored Joseph over them. Their father could see something special in Joseph that the Lord had revealed. The brothers wanted to kill Joseph but one brother objects to this action, and suggests that they throw him in the pit and decide on the next day what to do with him. This brother left the scene and went in the direction of their home. While he was gone, the others agreed to sell Joseph into slavery. Later that day, he was removed from the pit and sold to slave traders who passed through the area. The brother who had objected to the murder of Joseph came back to release him. He learned that Joseph was gone and feared that the other brothers had killed him. This thought made him very sad, so he tore his clothes and began to weep. This brother goes home to tell the father that Joseph was dead. When the father heard this news, he also began to weep at the loss of his son.

Some of you are wondering why I told this story about Joseph. There was a thing in this story that may happen to you. Key point number one was that the brothers of Joseph wanted to deceive their father, but he refused to go along with their plan.

**Question:** Do you think that Joseph was right when he said no to his brothers?

**Youth:** Yes, lying to your parents is not a good thing even when you know they will be mad at what you have done.

**Comment:** You young men who are here tonight could be faced with a similar situation where an individual or groups want you to do some things that are wrong. You have two choices, go along with the crowd, or use Joseph as an example and say no. Joseph stood alone and the brothers were upset with him. They probably said things like he is just a do-gooder who our father loves best. If you follow the group and they want you to do something that is wrong, why not take a Joseph position. This could save you some pain in the course of this life that you are living.

**Question:** What is another word for what the brothers suggested to Joseph?

**Youth:** It is kind of like peer pressure.

**Comment:** That is the answer that I am looking for. Do you not think that what I describe is a form of peer pressure (speaking again to the whole group)?

**Question:** Does this happen to any of you at school or at some other place?

**Youth:** Yes, people often say come on man lets go do this or that.

**Comment:** Do you all agree that Joseph is right to resist this temptation? I am glad that everyone understands that he is making the right decision. My point is that you could be in that same situation and the potential could be life threatening to you. God gives us all a brain and we should not let other people dictate what actions we take in life. My grandfather was a wise man and he gave me some good advice. Do not ever let other



people think for you, because every person can think for themselves. Peer pressure happens in the life of most people and it does not matter what your age is at the time. I had a group on my job who tried to apply peer pressure on me recently. I took the Joseph approach and stood alone because I think and do the thing that is best for me. I stood up in the room and established eye contact while telling them my feelings on that particular situation. I explained to the group that they could follow whatever direction they wanted. My thoughts were in a different direction and I wished them well. I gained respect for standing up for my beliefs.

There was another point in the story that I want to talk about and we will be finished tonight. We need to examine the actions of the brother who said do not kill, but throw Joseph in the pit. This brother left the scene and was returning to possibly release Joseph from the pit. He looks in the pit saw that Joseph was gone and weeps tearing his clothes as he realized that Joseph might be dead.

**Question:** Why do you think that Joseph's brother wept?

**Answer:** He thought that Joseph was dead.

**Comment:** This is true but the other brothers did not tear their clothes and weep. They sold him to the slave traders when this one brother is gone. They probably said good riddance and have a party to celebrate. Do you remember what I said earlier about these events? This one brother who is unnamed talks them out of killing Joseph at that time. The reaction by him upon returning to the pit suggests that he intended to release Joseph from the pit. This showed that he loved Joseph and did not expect him to be harmed. The question in my mind was why he did not stand up too his brothers at that time. I call what he did a back door move. This move occurs when an individual knows that an action is wrong but goes along with the crowd intending to fix the situation later.

**Question:** What is wrong with what I just described? If the crowd is wrong and you go along with them, is this a good thing?

**Answer:** No, you are as guilty in whatever has happened at that time.

**Comment:** That is correct and this goes back to what I quoted from my grandfather. Make decisions because you have thought out what is best for you. I am sure that everyone can see that this is another example of peer pressure. This second point in the same story is dealing with peer pressure.

I am sure he believes that he would eventually return Joseph to his father. The reality is that sometimes you only have one chance to do what is right. Maybe if he stood up to his brothers and said you know this is wrong to kill our brother, the outcome may have been different. Let's turn this around to your situation today in the present time. You may have a close friend who will stand alone and you go along with the crowd. Then you wait until you and him or alone to say I am with you, but I could not say it in front of the guys.

**Question:** Do you think that is the right way to be?

**Answer:** No, because that is not a true friend.

**Comment:** I agree with you because a true friend will speak up at the time of the discussion. You do not need a friend who you cannot find at crunch time. Peer pressure is a real life event in all of our lives. The good news is that you are never alone when you stand up for what is right. Joseph believes in God and God blesses him. He did have to endure some hardships but survives due to God's grace. Make a point of asking God on a daily basis to help you stand up for what is pleasing to God and reject things that are not pleasing in the sight of God. We all know that God will never endorse the murder of anyone. The heavenly father wants you to grow into a man of wisdom and power. Joseph

is such a man and provides the example of how peer pressure is not a factor to one who walks under the Word and protection of God. This concludes our story for tonight, let us pray for strength.

**Key points in the presentation**

- Do not let anyone influence you into doing something that you feel is wrong.
- Do not let anybody think for you.

**APPENDIX C**  
**PRE-TEST/POST-TEST**

## YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

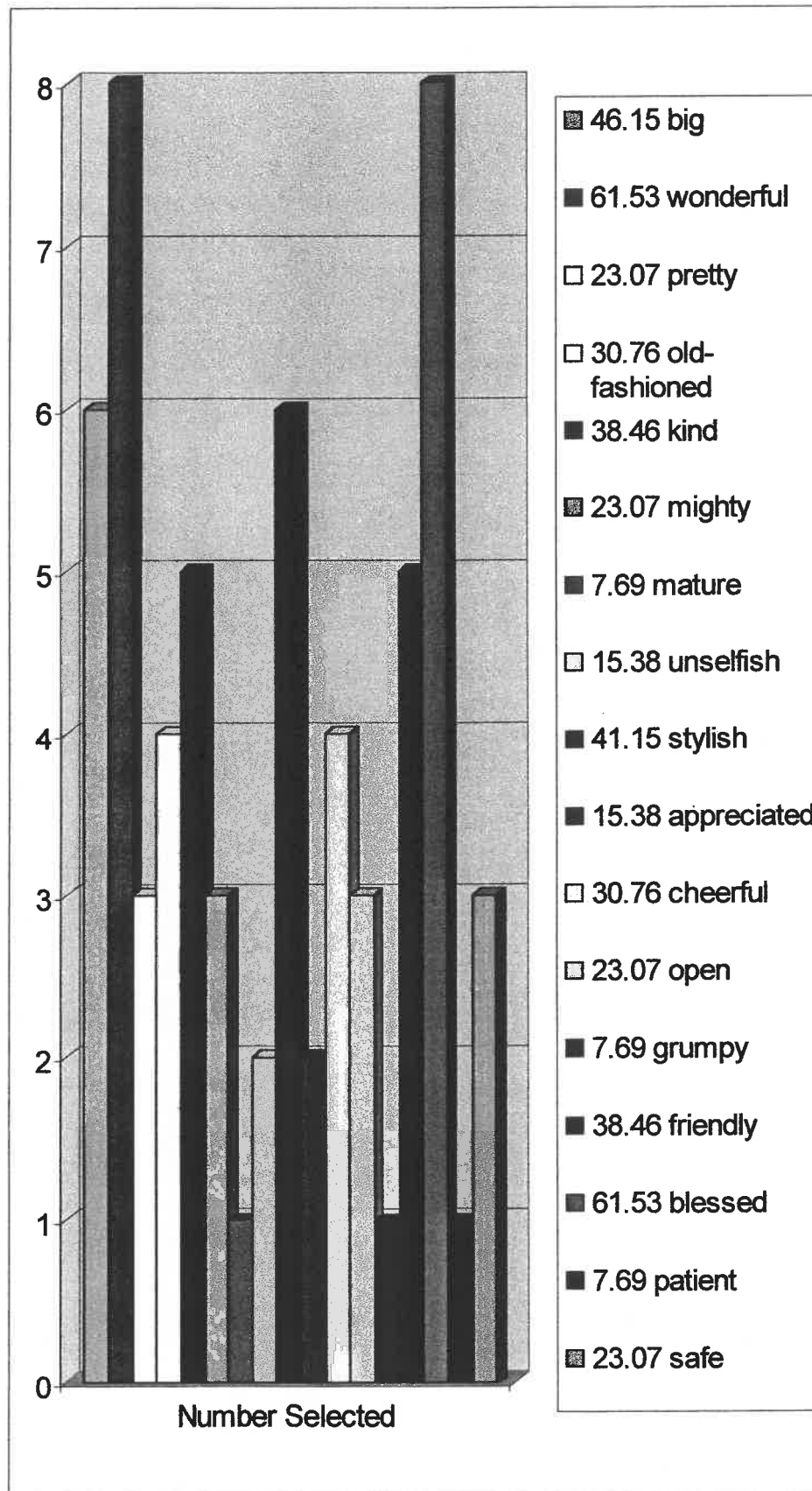
### Youth Participant Pre-Test/Post-Test

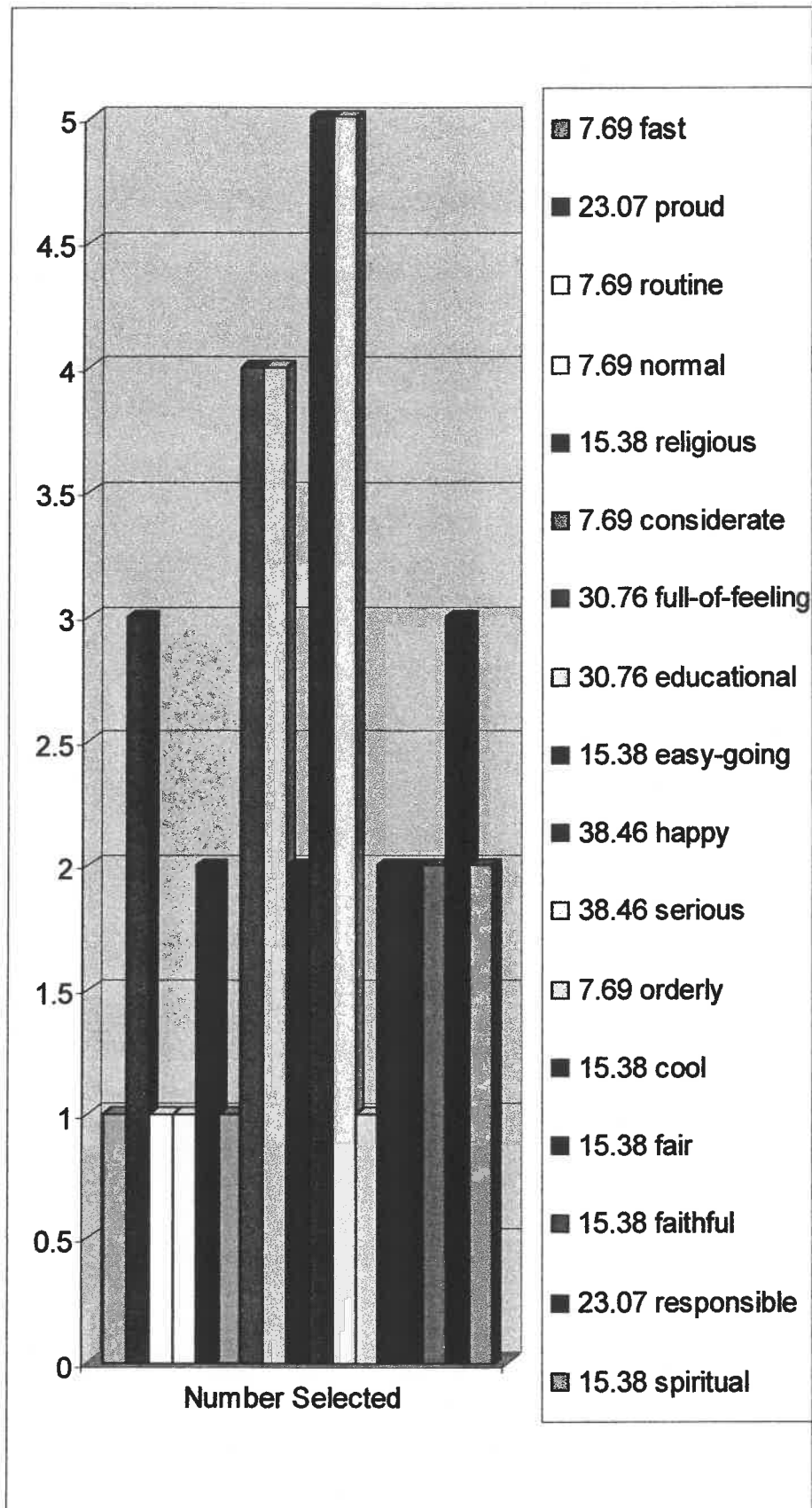
Circle 12 of the following adjectives that reflect your view of the church.

big	open	funny	great	ugly	easy-going
wonderful	grumpy	tough	unique	wild	content
pretty	sad	precious	open	strange	happy
old-fashioned	decent	crazy	quiet	moody	serious
kind	lively	popular	good	normal	orderly
mighty	friendly	hypocritical	ordinary	wasteful	horrible
odd	blessed	helpful	mean	moral	slack
orderly	modern	fascinating	dumb	famous	cool
selfish	gross	committed	successful	rich	rough
mature	classy	sensitive	first-class	religious	fair
correct	know-all	ambitious	fussy	considerate	merry
unselfish	patient	dangerous	thoughtful	full-of-feeling	messy
stylish	safe	calm	fast	cheap	faithful
reserved	generous	healthy	carefree	educational	loyal
appreciated	truth worth	high-spirited	proud	uptight	responsible
cheerful	idealistic	wild	routine	out-dated	spiritual

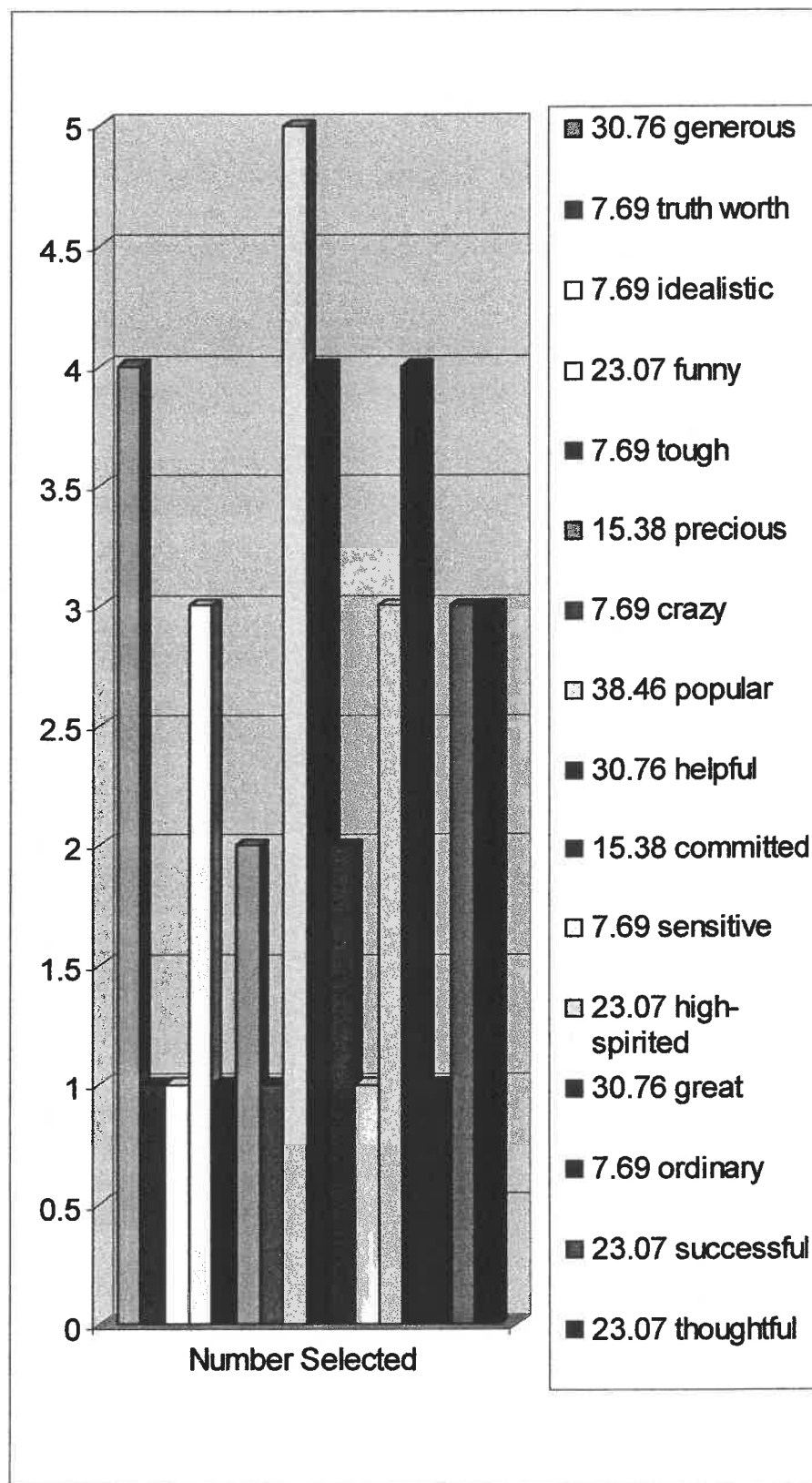
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**APPENDIX D**  
**PRE-TEST CONTROL GROUP GRAPHS**

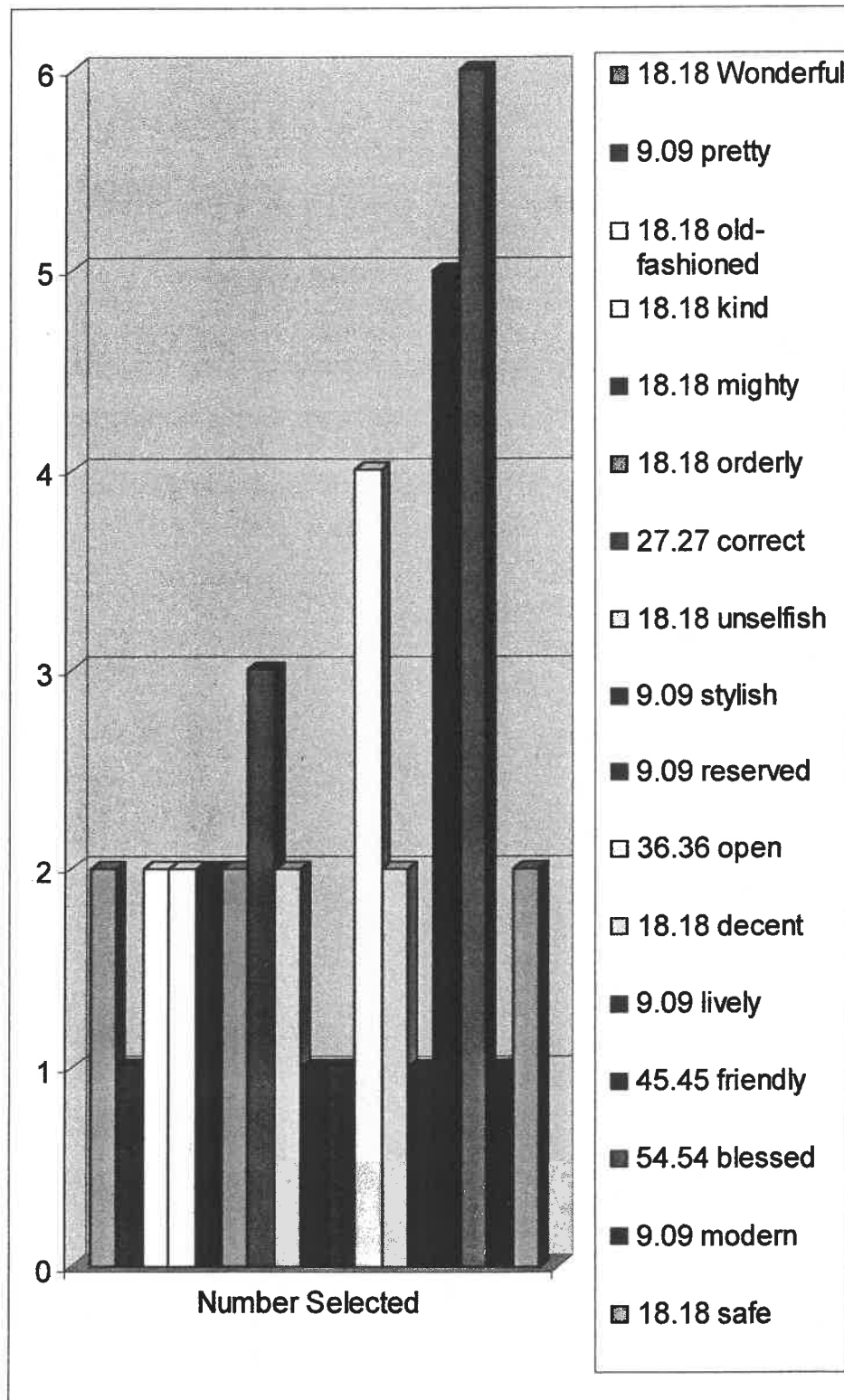


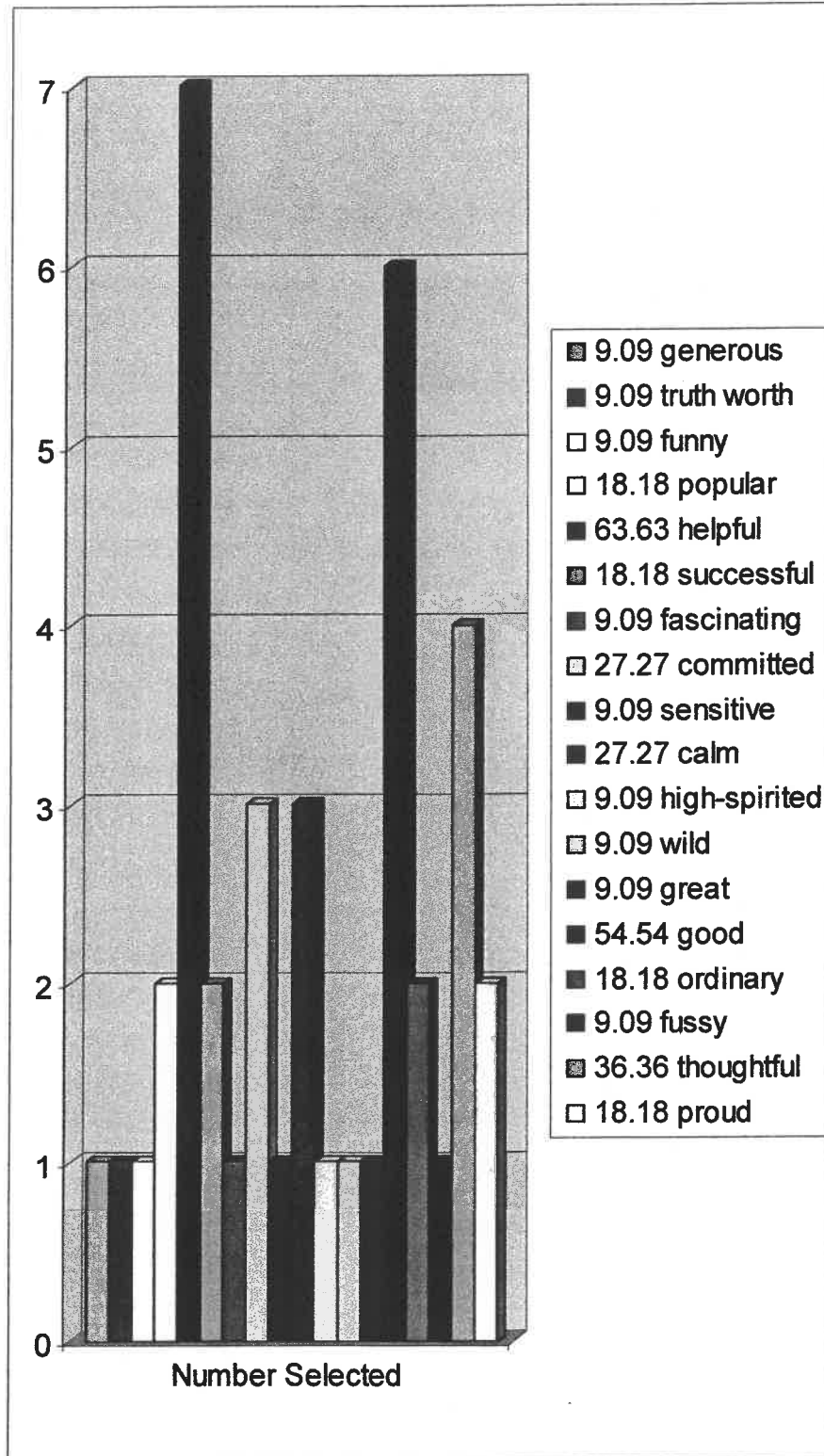


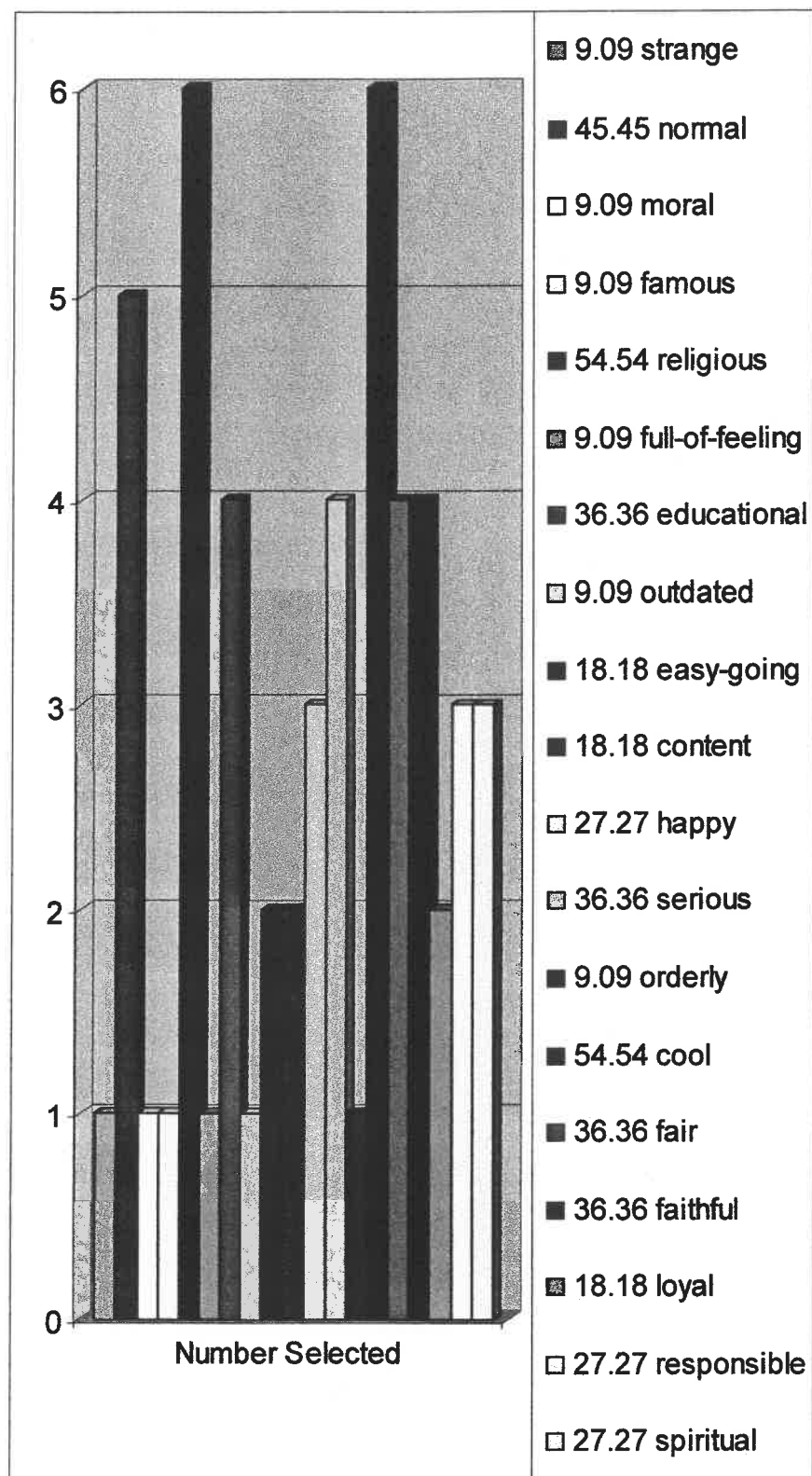




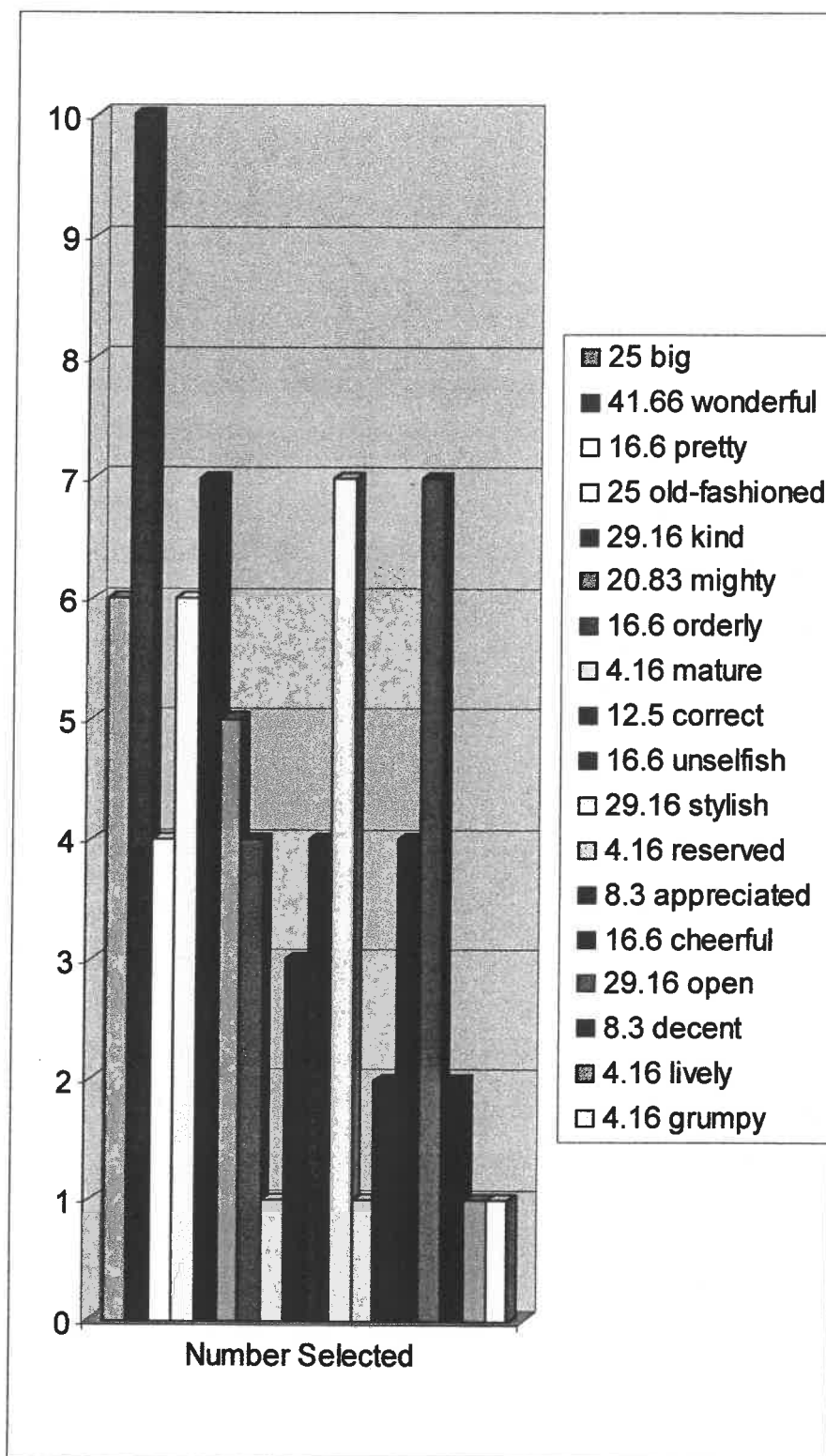
**APPENDIX E**  
**PRE-TEST EXPERIMENTAL GROUP BAR GRAPHS**

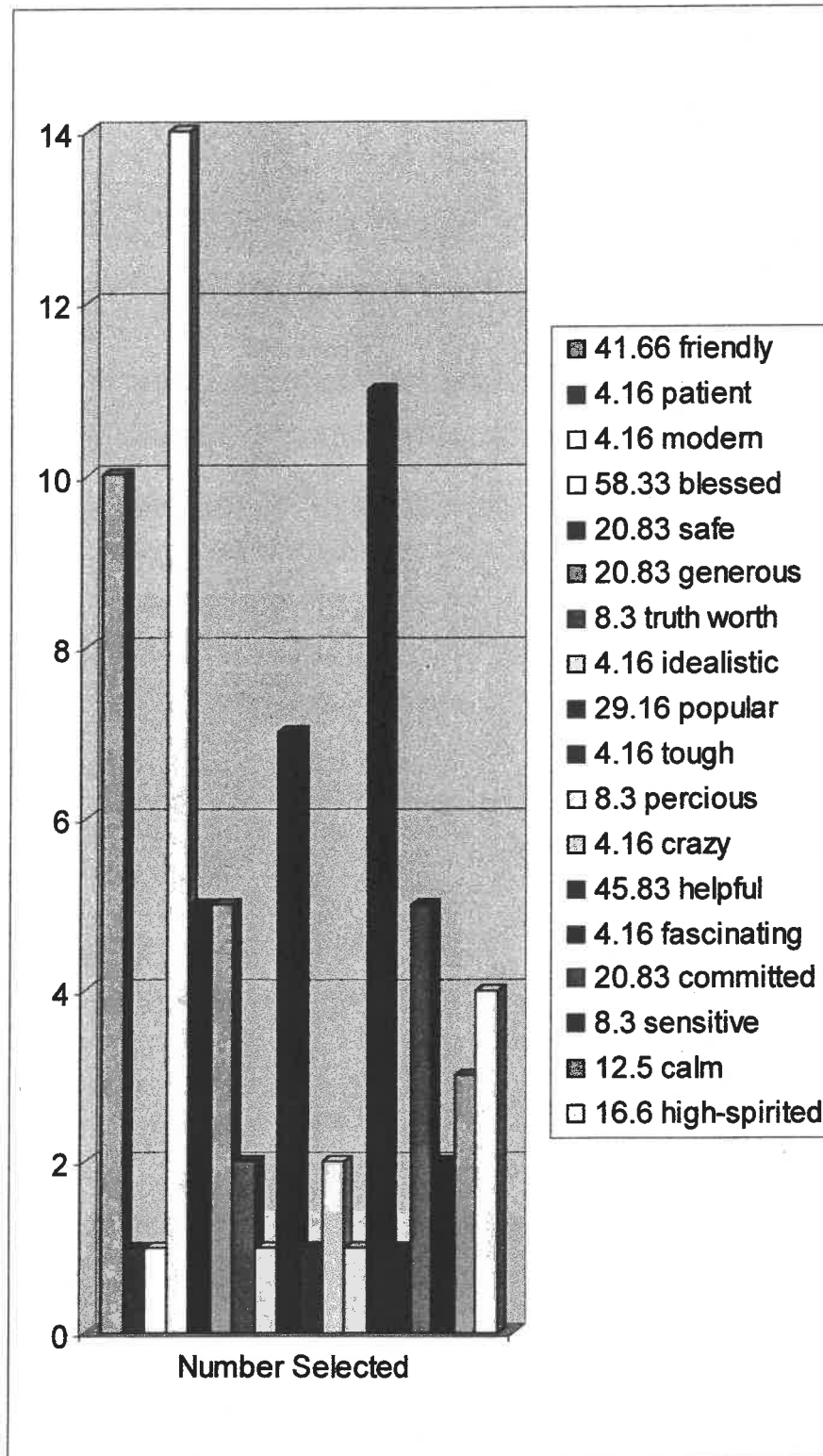




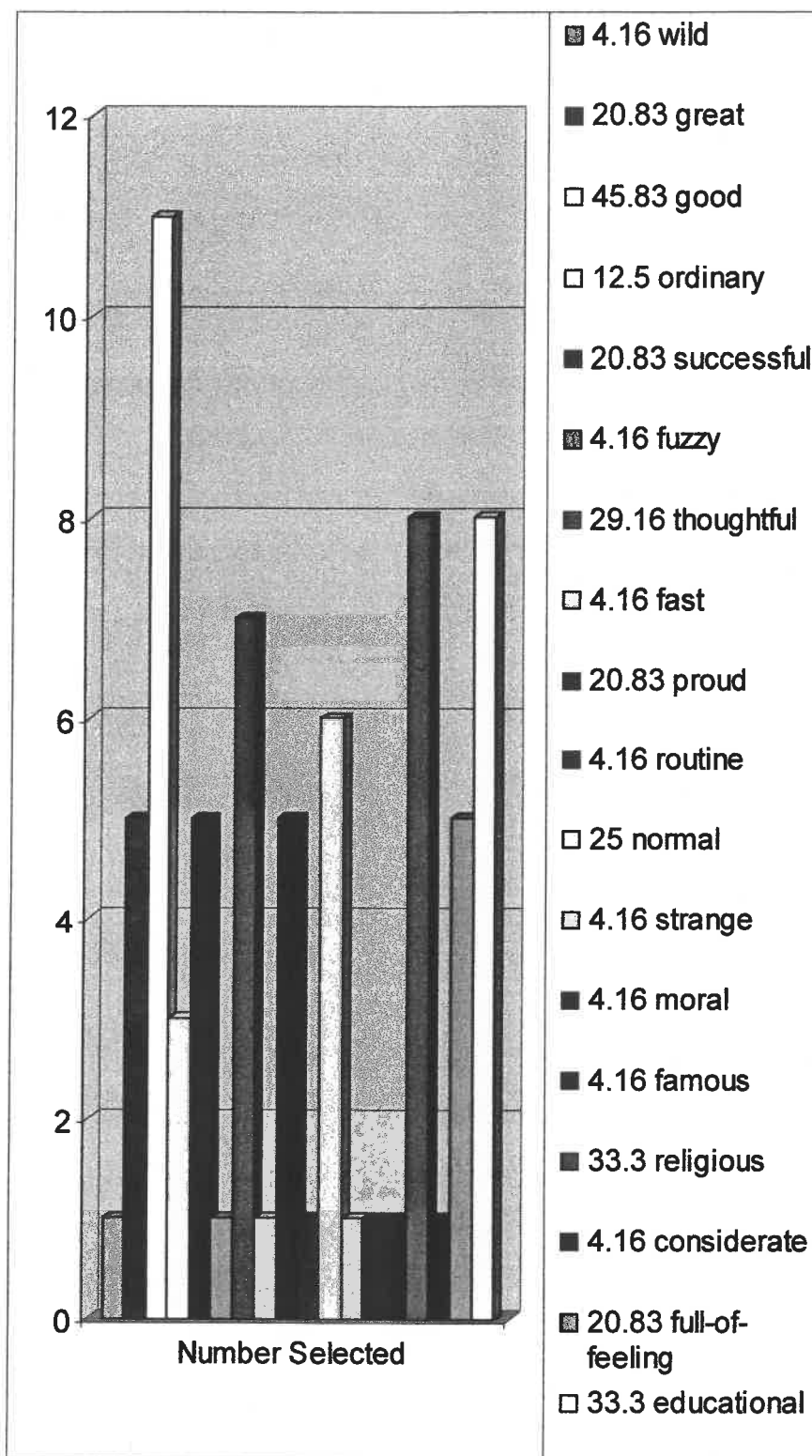


**APPENDIX F**  
**PRE-TEST CROSS-SECTIONAL GROUP BAR GRAPHS**

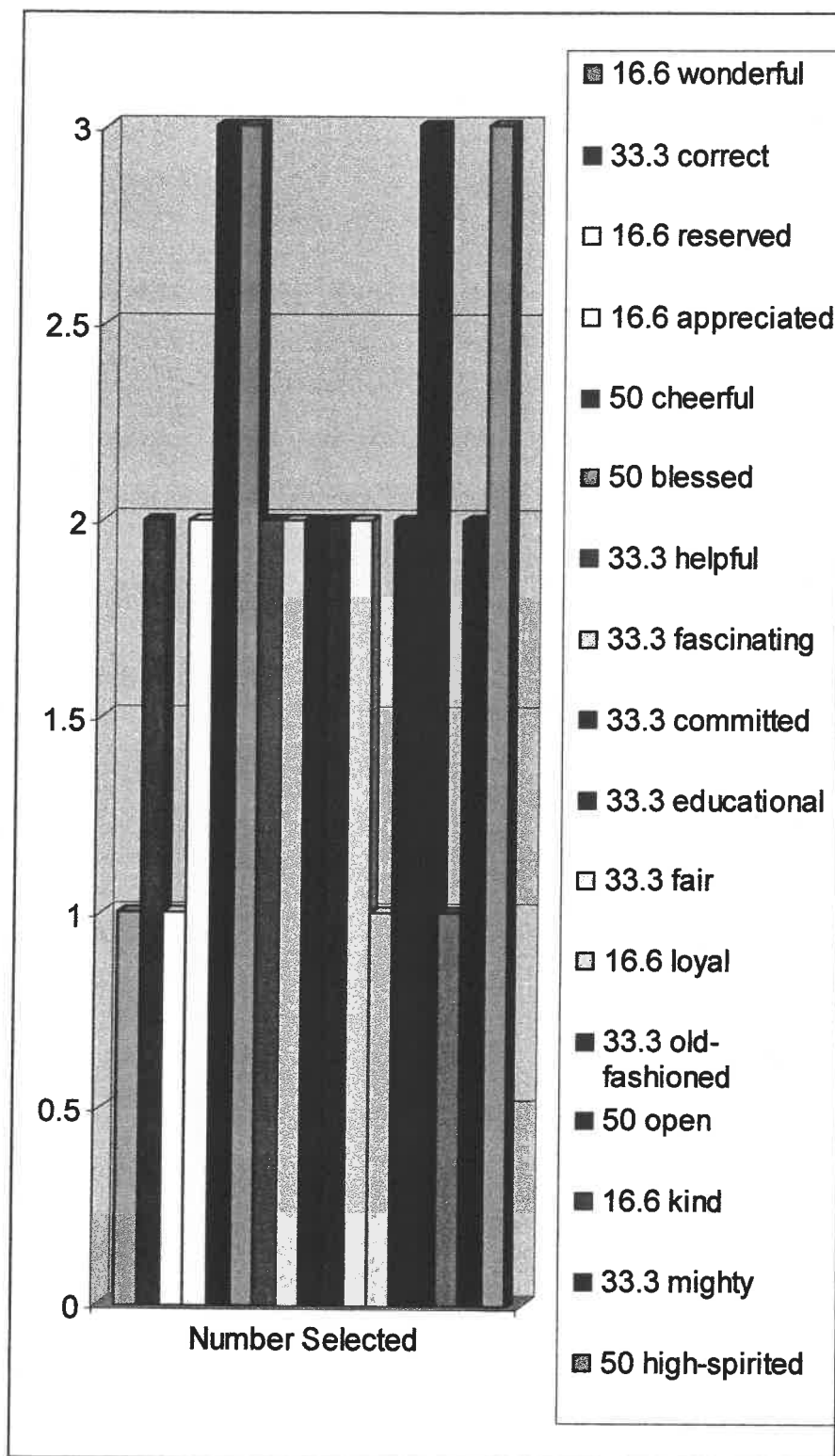


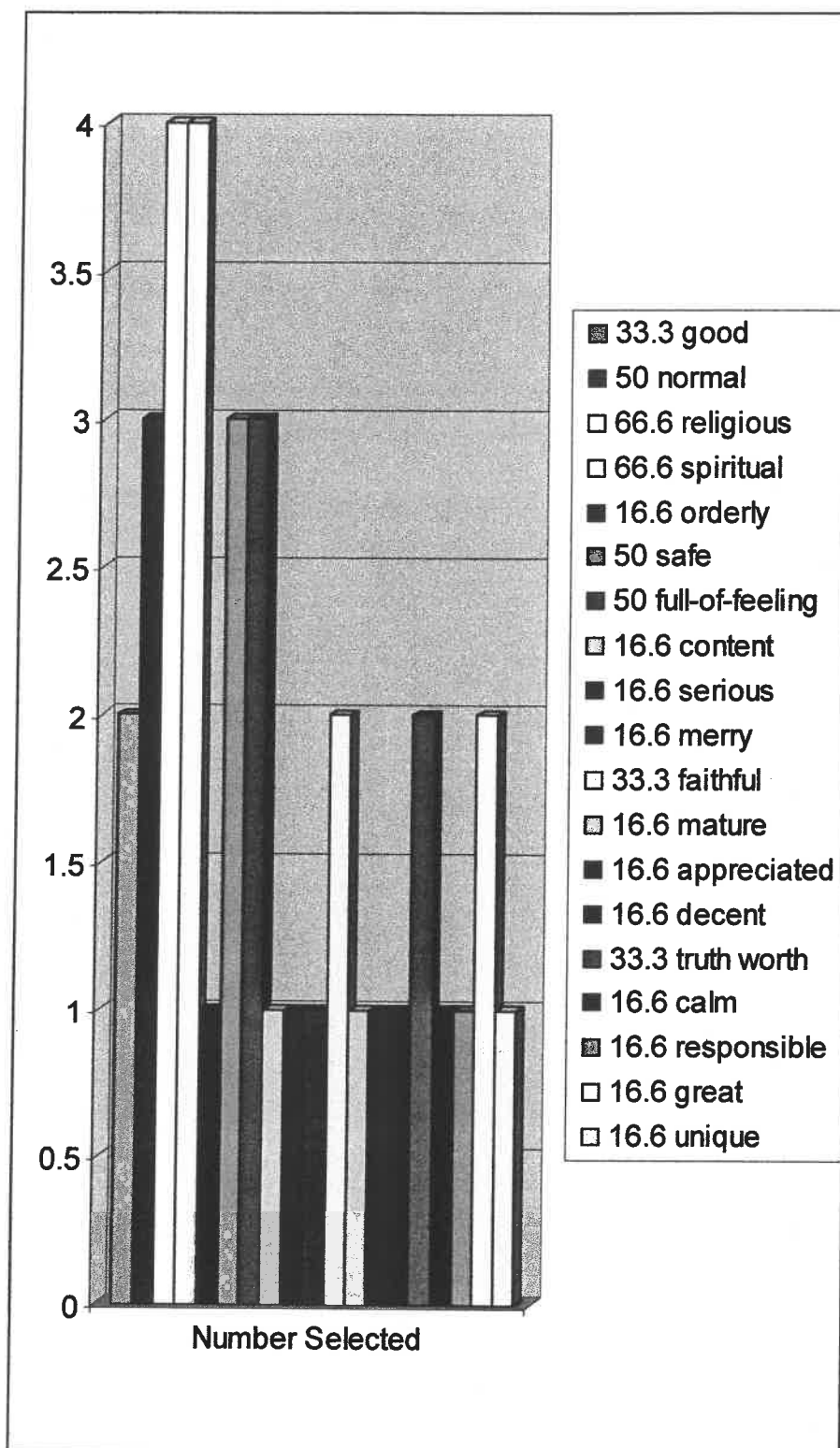






**APPENDIX G**  
**POST-TEST BAR GRAPHS**





**APPENDIX H**

**YOUTH RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT OVER TIME: A LONGITUDINAL  
STUDY OF RETENTION (SURVEY)**

### Regression of First Year Variables on Remaining a Member

<b>Step</b> <b>*</b>	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Beta</b>
1.	Intend to remain an active Adventist when out on own	.159
2.	Mother attends church frequently	.152
3.	More years in an Adventist day academy	.106
4.	Father attends church frequently	.091
5.	Pray personally more frequently	.007
6.	Agree with Adventist standards on dancing/discos	.074
7.	Worship with family more frequently	.062
8.	Years in Pathfinders (like scouts)	.054

\* First six betas significant beyond .01 level; 7 and 8 significant beyond .05 level

### Regression of First Year Variables on Regular Church Attendance

Step	Variables	Beta *
1.	Intend to remain an active Adventist when out on own	.136
2.	Mother attends church frequently	.112
3.	Agree that Adventist standards/rules are reasonable	.094
4.	Worship with family more frequently	.084

\* All betas significant beyond .01 levels

### Regression of First Year Variables on Dropping Out of Church

Step	Variables	Beta *
1.	Biological parents married and together	.195
2.	Worship with family more frequently	.172
3.	Intend to remain an active Adventist when out on own	.131

\* All betas significant beyond .01 levels

**APPENDIX I**  
**HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION STATE OF OUR NATION**  
**YOUTH SURVEYS**



### Most Difficult Item for Students to Give Up

	High School Student %
Cell phone	36
E-Mail	29
MTV	17
None/depends (VOL)	17
Not sure	1

Which one of the following things would be the hardest for you to give up for one month—e-mail, MTV, or a cell phone?

### Entertainment Media's Perceived Effect on Young People's Values and Morals

	High School Students %	
	5/02	5/01
Negative effect	42	46
Positive effect	18	11
No effect	31	36
Not sure	9	7

Would you say that the entertainment media today, such as music, movies, television, and video games, have a negative effect, a positive effect, or no effect on the values and morals of young people?

## High School Students and Pressure

	High School Students			
	Major Problem %	Minor Problem %	Not A Problem %	Not Sure %
<hr/>				
Pressure to get good grades				
May 2000.....	35	37	28	-
May 2001.....	26	36	38	-
<hr/>				
Family problems or not getting along with parents				
May 2002.....	17	34	49	-
May 2001.....	14	32	54	-
<hr/>				
Financial pressure				
May 2002.....	17	31	52	-
May 2001.....	15	27	57	1
<hr/>				
Pressure to look a certain way 1.				
May 2002.....	13	32	55	-
May 2001.....	16	30	53	1
<hr/>				
Pressure to do drugs or to drink				
May 2002.....	12	22	66	-
May 2001.....	12	24	64	-
<hr/>				
Pressure to engage in sexual activity before you are ready				
May 2002.....	9	23	68	-
May 2001.....	10	20	69	1
<hr/>				
Loneliness or feeling left out				
May 2002.....	8	27	64	1
May 2001.....	9	24	67	-
<hr/>				

The following are problems that some high school students face. For each one I read, please tell me whether it is a major problem for you, a minor problem for you, or not a problem for you.

1. In May 2001, this item was phrased "Too much pressure..."

### What More Could Your School Do To Keep You Safe?

	High School Students %
Keep drugs out of your school	35
Stop bullies from picking on other students	26
Screen students to make sure they are not carrying weapons into school	24
Prevent outside people from getting into your school during the day.	19
Offer more classes to teach tolerance and to resolve disputes	18
None (VOL)	1
Other (VOL)	4
Not sure	1
In which one or two of the following areas would you say your school could do more to keep you safe and secure?	

### Outlook For The Future Of The Country

	High School Students %
Hopeful and optimistic	73
Worried and pessimistic	23
Not sure	4
When you think about the future of the country, would you say that you are mainly hopeful and optimistic, or mainly worried and pessimistic?	

**Family Members Chosen As Role Models**  
**(among those who choose a family member as a role model)**

	<b>High School Students %</b>	
	<b>5/02</b>	<b>5/01</b>
Mother	27	26
Father	11	7
Grandparent	7	9
Aunt/uncle	6	6
Sister	5	7
Cousin	3	3
Other (VOL)	1	1
Not sure	2	1
What family member do you consider a role model?		

**Ways In Which The September 11 Attacks  
Have Affected Students**

	<b>Applies To Me %</b>	<b>Does Not Apply %</b>	<b>Not Sure %</b>
I feel closer to my family	69	31	-
I have prayed, meditated, or spent time in spiritual reflection	66	34	-
I have flown a flag	63	36	1
I have been frustrated because I can't do more to help	53	45	2
I have looked for a way to help the recovery and rescue effort	47	52	1
I have new ideas or changed my plans for after graduation	32	67	1

Here are some statements about things that people may have experienced, thought, or done since September 11. For each one, please tell me whether it applies to you or not.\*  
(\* asked of one-half the respondents)

**Were Students More Friendly Toward One Another After The September 11 Attacks?**

	<b>High School Students %</b>
Was true for a while, but is not true anymore	50
Is still true	14
Was never true/nothing changed	34
Not sure	2

Some students say that after the attacks, the students in their schools were more friendly and considerate of one another. Would you say that this was true in your school for a while but that things have gone back to the way they were before September 11, that this was true after September 11 and is still true today, or that nothing changed after September 11 in school?

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## Definition Of Success

### High School Students

	Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not At All Important %	Not Sure %
Having close family relationships				
May 2002 *-----	78	18	4	-
May 2001-----	84	13	3	-
Having a close group of friends				
May 2002 *-----	56	34	10	-
May 2001-----	60	30	10	-
Making a contribution to society				
May 2002 *-----	51	42	7	-
May 2001-----	49	44	7	-
Making a lot of money at your job				
May 2002 *-----	44	43	13	-
May 2001-----	35	49	16	-
Having an active religious or spiritual life				
May 2002 *-----	43	33	24	-
May 2001-----	44	35	20	1
Being famous or respected in your field				
May 2002 *-----	28	45	27	-
May 2001-----	27	44	29	-
Being attractive and popular				
May 2002 *-----	9	40	51	-
May 2001-----	8	39	53	-

People today define success in lots of ways. For each of the following, please tell me how important the items in your personal definition of success in life—very important, somewhat important, or not important at all. (\* Asked of one-half the respondents)

### Distribution Of Students By Age

	High School Students %
12 years old or younger	-
13 years old	1
14 years old	11
15 years old	25
16 years old	25
17 years old	22
18 years old	12
19 years old	4
Not sure/refused	-
How old are you?	

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